

Mambwe People

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Mambwe; Mambwe-Lungu

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): (1)

MGR

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Northeastern Northern Providence south of Lake Tanganyika in Zambia. Also in Tanzania, Rukwa Region, Sumbawanga District, the southeastern shore to the south of Lake Tanganyika. (1)

“The Mambwe lived directly on a junction of routes between east and Central Africa, and have long been subject to influences from without.

1.4 Brief history:

“British rule incorporated the Mambwe into a world-wide economic and political system, and changed their traditional mode of life. But the Mambwe were not entirely isolated before the British came; the natural highway between East and Central Africa passed through their country and thus exposed them to outside influence. They had defended themselves against the Lunda and Bemba, fought with and against Ngoni, and traded with Arabs. The Mambwe had adopted both goods and customs from the strangers who came their way, and from the moment that the British arrived, were willing to sell their labour in return for European goods and money.” (9p220)

“In the past not all travellers who used these routes brought benefits to the Mambwe, they tend to regard strangers with suspicion, an attitude justified by their past experiences. They are a small people, and though insular are hardy and resilient, and cherish the independence that has been assailed so often in the past. They have occupied their present territory for at least 200 years, for according to Coxhead their Bemba neighbours found them already in possession, when the Bemba themselves arrived from the Congo in the eighteenth century... The first Europeans to live in the district explained Mambwe truculence on the grounds that they were not a ‘true’ people, but that the descendants of a heterogeneous collection of runaway slaves. This explanation is still current. A senior Government official told me that the Mambwe were far more difficult to administer than the Bemba, because their chiefs had no power and the people were by nature rebellious and unruly. This natural disability they inherited from their forefathers, who were those slaves so troublesome to the Arab traders that they were either discarded or allowed to escape.” (9p12)

Zambia’s history: “Zambia gained its independence from the United Kingdom in October 1964, after nearly a century of colonial domination. Independence brought new opportunities as well as new challenges to the country. For example, whereas colonial rule was an oppressive system of governance that could enforce compliance and cooperation, the new government had to find a way to unite Zambia’s 73 different ethno-linguistic groups into one nation...” (7p1)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

“By the late 1880’s missions had been established at the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, in what is now Zambia; and although these were much harassed by Arab slave-traders they managed to survive. A few years later the White Fathers began work in the Mambwe area where they won grudging acceptance...” (2p143)

“In 1887 the London Missionary Society opened a mission among the Mambwe, and in 1889 another among the Lungu. But for some years these L.M.S. missions made little impact. They had settled among the people who were harassed by slave raiders, especially the Bemba. For this reason they were welcomed as protectors, and their stockade stations became centers of refuge. Men formed governments of their own in the L.M.S. [...] which was less a help than a hindrance; they were seen more as chiefs than as men of religion, and in any case they could not hope to achieve any widespread influence until they left their stockades and penetrated the Bemba, the major power in the region.” (3p154)

“White Fathers and Capuchins in their early evangelization planted the seed of faith which has been received differently with the purpose and goal of making Christ and his message of, and invitation to, total human liberation...” (7p1)

“...For according to Coxhead their Bemba neighbours found them already in possession, when the Bemba themselves arrived from the Congo in the eighteenth century. The Bemba claim to have pushed the Mambwe back towards the north and forced them to pay tribute. This may be so, although the Mambwe deny that they ever paid tribute to the Bemba, who lie on the southern boundary of their country. The Bemba are the largest tribe of the plateau, and before the Europeans arrived dominated the whole area. The Mambwe regarded the Bemba as their traditional enemies, and the Lungu, who occupy the lake shore and also have a western boundary with the Mambwe, the Inamwanga, and the Iwa to the east, as their allies. It is certain that throughout the nineteenth century the Bemba raided the Mambwe.” (9p12-13)

“There was also a good deal of fighting; the Bemba claim to have chased away chiefs of the Iwa and Mambwe, though this process of expulsion continued well into the nineteenth century, rather than happening all at once.” (2p109)

“The new fire-power, combined with the disorganization produced among the smaller tribes by slave-raiding, enabled the Bemba to take over much country from Mambwe, Tabwa, and Lungu...” (2p114)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

Terrain: "Zambia lies in the southern tropics; a huge butterfly shape sprawled across one and half thousand kilometers of the great inland plateau which forms the spine of Africa. This plateau is mainly based on the very old crystalline rocks, rich in minerals but making for soils of low fertility." (3p1)

"Located on the plateau of Northern Rhodesia and south of Lake Tanganyika. The height of altitude is 4,500 feet, but the peaks at points and the highest point is Mount Sunzu, which is 6,000 feet. To the northeast of Mambwe country the thick forest gives way to open grassland interspersed with clumps of trees. In this open grassland the valleys between the ridges form grassy plains, which are often waterlogged in the rainy season. The whole of this open area is drained by the Saisi River and its tributaries, and the Saisi river itself forms an approximate boundary between the grasslands and the forest. This variation in type of vegetation affects Mambwe agricultural practices, for they have two distinct types of cultivation to correspond with the two distinct ecological areas. The Mambwe distinguish two types of cultivators, calling the grassland-people, Aisa Mambwe, and the forest-people, Maswepa Mambwe." (9p9-10)

Climate & Seasons: "Almost a Mediterranean climate because the elevation of the plateau offers little chance for temperatures to exceed 90 degrees, even in the cold season falls only to provide brisk and sparkling mornings. The rainfall is confined to the six months from October to April, with the larger part from January onwards, and is in the region of 42 inches a year. This raining season is the spring and summer, the season of cultivation. After the rains, between May and July, the weather gradually becomes cool and dry, and the temperature falls to its lowest, so that this period is counted as winter, although this is an appropriate word to describe the most invigorating time of the year. From July to October the temperature begins to rise once more, and the country gradually becomes dry and dusty. This dry and dusty period does not affect the hydration of the area because of the many waters (most influential rivers are: Chambezi, the Kalungu, and the Saisi)." (9p9-10)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

Population size: 63,000 Mambwe between Zambia and Tanzania (1)

Village size: "An ordinary Mambwe village (muzi) generally consists of a group of huts, between thirty and fifty in number, with grainbins (intanta) and kitchens. The chiefs' villages are larger, and Chief Nsokolo's the largest of all, with about 150 huts." (9p16)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): (6p1)

- Beans ("chilemba")
- Okra ("kumbi")
- Maze (made into porridge [almost always eaten with proten] called ugali)
- "The staple of Mambwe diet is a porridge (insima) made from finger millet (eleusin coracana). The millet is prepared by the women who grind it into flour, and the porridge is generally eaten hot, with other foodstuffs as a relish. They also grow cassava, a crop introduced by the Administration as a standby against failure of the millet, as well as pumpkins, several types of beans, sorghum, maize, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and bananas. Various wild fruits are collected from the forest.: (9p20)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

- "The Mambwe who live near the Saisi river obtain a certain amount of fish, but the Saisi is so blocked with immense reeds for most of its way through their country that fishing is an extremely difficult tiring process and they usually fish only once a year. On the whole they prefer to buy dried fish from peddlers who fetch it from the Lungu fishermen on Lake Tanganyika and bring it round the villages. Game formerly abounded, but the great rinder-pest outbreak of the 180s and the acquisition of firearms by the Africans have almost exterminated the herds. The villagers rarely have fresh game meat other than reedbuck and duiker. They very seldom kill their own cattle for meat, as they prefer to sell an available mature stock. They must have permission from the Administration to slaughter beasts, as killing is controlled in the interests of the immature and breeding stock. Occasionally, wild pig is killed and the meat eaten. They also buy tinned food from the stores." (9p20)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Not found

2.4 Food storage:

Not found

2.5 Sexual division of production: (6p114-115)

"Under conditions of circulatory outmigration for men, women food producers had secured the right to sell surplus from their kitchen gardens. Such surpluses were small and mainly in maize. Mambwe women used the money thus earned to buy clothes and personal goods. [...] By the late 1970s a number of historical changes had weakened the women's hold

over the maize trade. These changes had come in the wake of developments in Zambia's political economy. [...] Mambwe claimed that state-controlled production of food surplus was the only respectable alternative to wage-labour migration. Would-be migrants in particular insisted that government commit itself to the development of village agriculture. Mambwe men also equated 'state-controlled' with 'male-controlled', and did not feel they needed to justify their taking over the women's monopoly in trading maize. Nowadays, marketable crops are grown not in the ivizule, but on plots reserved for marketing purposes. These plots, on which some of the family food may also be grown, are cleared by men and allocated to individual women, usually wives."

"Mambwe women have well-defined rights over the distribution of food crops: women alone have legitimate access to food stored in the household's graneries. Rights over surplus are at best negotiable. With regard to the main traditional staple (millet), custom allows a husband to try and persuade his wife to sell stored grain. But wives have rights of refusal, for instance, on the grounds that the household would suffer if insufficient food were kept. [...] When they harvested maize, both men and women were explicit that their cash needs could only be met through selling off part of the crop. A woman with children would strive to obtain a large enough share of any 'surplus' sold (millet, maize or beans) by stressing the number of mouths she feeds, the long days she labours in the field, and by pointing out that her mother never needed to beg for the right to sell invisible produce. Husbands usually countered that being cut off from the migrant jobs their fathers used to enjoy, they too now had a great need for cash. [...] In the absence of clear-cut guidelines for the disposal of produce, it is understandable that female-male relations were often tense during harvests. One common solution to the problem of rights over surplus was for the man to claim the proceeds of home-grown food surplus, while allowing the woman to invest some of the money in regional commerce."

2.6 Land tenure:

"It was from the Mambwe or Iwa that the Luban immigrants including the Bemba learned the now widespread practice of chitemene, the pollarding of trees to make an ash-bed for sowing millet." (3p109)

"Mambwe are no longer simple subsistence cultivators. All of the men, at some period of their lives, work for wages both at home and abroad, and these earnings have become essential to them. For most Mambwe men, life is an alternation between work in the fields and work in the enterprise established by the Europeans... Although finger millet is the main crop in both the grasslands and the forest, the preparation of the fields is quite different in the two areas. In the open grasslands the main rock formation is sandstone with outcrops of dolerite. The principle soil types are a light sandy soil which turns dark when damp and full of humus, and in the valleys an even more productive but heavier sandy soil, which has a fairly high silt content. On these soils the Mambwe practice a fallow system of cultivation, marked by a distinctive method of green manuring and crop rotation that enables them to use the same land for periods up to ten years in succession, although usually they cultivate one field for between five and seven years before resting it [...] In the forests, the sandy soil is mostly grey or yellowish-red and there are also ridges of red and red-chocolate doleritic soils. Here the Mambwe use a variation of the ash-planting system, based on the preparation of a seedbed from wood ash. The forest Mambwe cultivate one field for between three and five years, and then cut trees to make a fresh field. These forest Mambwe do not keep trees to make a fresh field. These forest Mambwe do not keep cattle in any numbers owing the scarcity of suitable pasturage in the forest. In the grasslands a man takes a virgin soil (insinde) under cultivation for a new garden in March, towards the end of the rainy season. The grass is long at this time, anything from three to five feet high, and sometimes higher. The Mambwe use hoes to work the soil into mounds, varying from three to eight feet in diameter, turning the long grass into the centre of each mound. This method prevents the grass from seeding, which reduces weeding to a minimum. The grass at this time is at the succulent stage and rots quickly. When the grass is very high, the Mambwe first cut it with a scythe, and pile it together with any bushes and small trees on the site into small circles of brushwood. When these piles are dry, the Mambwe set fire to them and plant pumpkins in the ash. These burnt patches seldom exceed twenty-five feet in diameter[...]" (9p21-22)

2.7 Ceramics:

In the huts there is a shrine shape of a small clay pot (katindya) marked with whitewash. When beer is brewed, a little is always poured into this pot (9p16-18)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

Not found

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Not found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

Not found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

Not found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

Not found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

Not found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

Not found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

Not found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

“We cannot make any definite statement regarding the age at which a girl may become a “wife”, but is possible to determine the age at which cohabitation is recognized to be possible. A man may see a young girl, five or six years old, and may at once come to terms with her father as to the amount to be paid in order to make her his wife. Should a Mambwe have other spouses, then such a girl will be called upon for cohabitation only when she reaches her thirteenth or fourteenth year and is able to enter the state of motherhood. [...] The boys, however, rarely take upon themselves the married state until they have reached the seventeenth or eighteenth year. In their case delay beyond the age of physical capacity for marriage is necessitated by inability to amass the price to be paid for a fiancée.” (4p346)

“The Mambwe say that men marry at a younger age today than they did in the past. Men marry between the ages of twenty and twenty-five.” (9p42)

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: (5p179)

“In general, government policy appears to give priority to ordinance marriage. For instance, couples married according to customary law are permitted to remarry under the Marriage Act, but not vice versa. The Office of the Registrar-General is responsible for the registration only of statutory marriages, and it has prepared a detailed handbook to guide officers responsible for registration. Since independence, more marriage districts that coincide with administrative districts have been created to enable more Zambians to contract ordinance marriages. The High Court of Zambia handles divorce cases under the Marriage Act, which has universal principles; local courts are responsible for divorces under customary law, which varies according to the ethnic group involved.”

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

“The Mambwe people are known to be polygamous (impali), although this trend is slowly changing with religious affiliations, and advancements in modern schooling and trends.” (10p1)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

“The amount required varies according to the position held by the lover. In the case of a chief as many as two cows are required; an ordinary peasant is required to give six or seven goats.” (4p346)

“Technically, a husband who has paid lobola (marriage payments) is regarded as the owner of his wife’s income, and he has the right to prevent his wife from working. Thus, in case of marital conflict about a wife’s employment, courts are likely to rule in favor of the husband. This also implies that a woman who works against her husband’s wishes risks divorce, for she is not fulfilling her obligation to obey him. In general, the persistence of the requirements that a husband make marriage payments places women in the unfavorable economic position.” (5p177)

4.9 Inheritance patterns: (5p177)

“The second important feature of customary marriage is that it does not alter a person’s rights to inheritance in the natal kinship group; spouses do not expect to inherit property from each other. The disadvantaged partner in this case is the wife, since in addition she may be denied rights to household property from each other. This is generally assumed to belong to the husband, the owner of the matrimonial home. In the event of divorce, the hearing of household property accumulated during marriage is at the discretion of the husband. Customary wives who have contributed their earnings either directly or indirectly to the purchase of inheritable household items are not generally viewed as joint owners; this property belongs to the husband. [...] The fact that a widow has no rights to inherit property from her husband has led to a new social problem in urban areas: the dispossession of widows and orphans. This did not occur in traditional rural societies because of the husband’s heir also “inherited” the widow and assumed responsibility for the children; the problem of the widow’s inheritance from her deceased husband was not pressing because she was expected to marry one of her husband’s heirs.”

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

Not found

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

Not found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

Not found

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

Not found

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

Not found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

Not found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

Not found

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

Not found

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

“The Mambwe have a word for the hymen, katowa. Evidence of virginity is sought on the wedding night, and a marriage may be declared void if the girl is found not to be a virgin. She is inspected after intercourse by an old woman, who makes a statement to the families of the couple.” (9p42)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

Not found

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

Not found

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

Not found

4.22 Evidence for couvades

Not found

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

Not found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships?

“A few clans are linked together in joking and burial relationships, whereby the members are permitted without offence to joke with, tease, curse, and vilify each other when they meet. They are also obliged to bury each other, and marriage is encouraged between members of clans bearing this relationship to one another. The burying clan attend the funeral of a joking clansman, dig the grave, and wash and inter the body. Each lineage of the royal clan has several joking partnerships with other clans, and these partners also slaughter the cow whose skin the dead body of a royal headman or chief must be wrapped. They also assist at the installation of an heir.” (9p138)

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

“Cikolwe is the man at the head of a patrilineal descent group of any size. He may be alive or dead. He may be the founding ancestor of the clan, or the present head of a house. The position of cikolwe is hereditary and the man who takes the place of a recognized cikolwe becomes one himself. Every section of a clan of whatever size has a cikolwe whose name is associated with the founding and the continuance of the group as such.” (9p141)

“The striking stability of Mambwe villages, which are the residential units of their society, raises the question whether patrilineal societies are better fitted than matrilineal societies to survive in conditions of rapid economic and social change. It has been suggested that patrilineal peoples adjust themselves more readily than matrilineal peoples to the absence of large numbers of men.” (6p86)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

“The Mambwe patrilineal clan may be defined as the largest number of agnates who claim to be descended from a common ancestor and between whom marriage is forbidden and sexual relations considered incestuous.”

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? (4p346)

“As regards to the marriage ceremonies: Betrothal (kocela).”

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? (10p1)

“They also distinguish the last names for males and females, like the Namwanga people, by applying prefixes “Si” and “Na” to be the first two letters of the last name e.g. Sinyangwe (Male) & Nanyangwe (Female), Sikasula (Male) & Nakasula (Female), Sinkamba (Male) & Nankamba (Female) etc.”

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

“...and marriage is encouraged between members of clans bearing this [joking relationship] to one another.” (9p138)

“Five royal lineages may marry into one another, but marriage between members of the same royal lineages may marry into one another, but marriage between members of the same royal lineage is forbidden. None of the other clans have named lineages, nor is marriage permitted between their constituent lineages. The royal lineages therefore have some of the characteristics of clans: they have distinguishing names and are allowed to marry into one another. The lineage is not a corporate or localized community, except that the lineages of the royal clan are associated with definite titles and their attached estates.” (9p139)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? (4p346)

“As regards to the marriage ceremonies: Betrothal (kocela). If the parents or guardians have not yet arranged a marriage then the young man himself seeks a wife. In the case of genuine love matches, where two young people are mutually attracted, the marriage is not arranged for them by others. The aspirant to their daughter’s hand has, of course, to satisfy the parents or guardians in the matter of the price. There is no doubt that there are such love matches. The lover sends a friend, one not easily daunted, to the girl’s parents. This love messenger carries a present to the family of the chosen girl and has to make the preliminary arrangements for marriage. The parents do not give immediate consent because a marriage arrangement is usually not merely a matter for the parents but also for the uncles and the aunts: moreover, these all expect to get a big present (mpango, insalamu): This being so, the parents’ conventional reply is, ‘Go back, and return here tomorrow.’ That means that the messenger must return to receive the decision of the family council.”

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Not found

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Not found

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

Not found

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

Not found

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

Not found

4.18 Cannibalism?

Not found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

“The size of these village states varied, but from the accounts from travellers, and the extent of the old ditches that can still be seen, I estimate that the smallest had at least 100 huts within it.” (9p72)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

Not found

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

“The older villages were all ruled either by chiefs or by royal headmen who stood in a perpetual relationship of son or grandson to the chief [...] Under the Mambwe rules of succession of chieftainships, only a son born after his father had succeeded to his title was eligible to be considered for succession in turn. Thus the chief tended to appoint his elder sons, born before he succeeded, to be headmen over villages. He allocated a specific area and gave the prince some followers. These appointments in theory were made for the lifetime only of the first incumbent of the headmanship. The gaining chief reserved the right to appoint one of his own sons to a royal headmanship when the incumbent died. But these royal headmanships tended to become hereditary in the lineage section of the first incumbent, and his relatives resisted the right of the chief to appoint his own sons. In effect, the names of the first royal headman became titles associated with specific villages and estates. A title can be inherited, and with it the right to rule the village to which it is attached. A commoner cannot inherit a title belonging to the royal clan. In the early days of the pax Britannica, when the stockaded villages were giving place to smaller open villages, the new villages almost invariably had royal headmen...” (9p76)

“Each chieftaincy has a different set of commoner class holding headmanships within it, although individual members of all clans are to be found dispersed throughout the whole Mambwe area. The core of the village is usually the segment of an agnatic lineage, of which the headman is the senior member. A headmanship tends to attract other members of the headman’s clan, thus creating a local concentration of this clan’s members. Only three clans, apart from the chiefs’ clans, hold headmanships in both royal and commoner chieftaincies...” (9p79)

“The political system of Mambwe can be understood only in relation to the residential arrangement of Mambwe groups, and the social and kinship ties that exist between them. Villages are local groups to which a political value is attached, and

villages are grouped within chieftaincies [...] All Mambwe belong to widely-dispersed patrilineal clans: the lineages of the royal clan form the framework of the political system and the cohesion of Mambwe society appears to depend on the dominance of the royal clan. The people say that there were clans in the country before there were chiefs. The members of the royal Sichula clan claim that it brought chieftanship to the country; before, chiefs were not known [...] Each clan has a distinctive name (mwiko). I counted fifty-five of these, of which the Mambwe say that thirty-nine are their own and the others they share with their neighbours, the Lungu, Bemba, and Inamwanga. The clan names sometimes represent natural objects in the environment, or manufactured objects but most often are abstract names, with few equivalents in English. “ (9p137-138)

5.4 Post marital residence:

“Female-headed households of Mambwe and Lungu account for nearly 33 per cent of the total number of households in a study of marriage patterns across 150 households [...] Not all single women who leave their natal village, the village of their ex-husband or the town where they resided with him, arrive in Mbala to become or remain the head of the household. Many, however, do remain independent.” (6p38)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Some, defended against Bemba and Lungu

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

Not found

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

“A few clans are linked together in joking and burial relationships, whereby the members are permitted without offence to joke with, tease, curse, and vilify each other when they meet. They are also obliged to bury each other, and marriage is encouraged between members of clans bearing this relationship to one another. The burying clan attend the funeral of a joking clansman, dig the grave, and wash and inter the body. Each lineage of the royal clan has several joking partnerships with other clans, and these partners also slaughter the cow whose skin the dead body of a royal headman or chief must be wrapped. They also assist at the installation of an heir.” (9p138)

“A special relationship exists between a man and a wife who was a virgin when she married, and they address each other as kapundu. The same value is not attached to subsequent marriages, nor are the marriage payments so high.” (9p42)

5.8 Village and house organization:

“The buildings are made of wattle-and-daub, and are rectangular in plan, although there are a few round huts. The verandah is enclosed round three sides of the hut. This enclosure forms an extra room which can be used either as pen for small stock or as a kitchen. Houses of sun-dried brick are now being built. The huts are laid out in rows, with the doors facing one another from rudimentary streets. The grain-bins, kitchen huts, and latrines are sited behind the living huts. The grain-bins are of two kinds, one much larger than the other. They are cylindrical in shape, and raised from the ground on platforms. They are all thatched. The women use a ladder to gain access to the taller bins, which are about twelve feet high. The smaller bins are about three to four feet high, and grouped in batteries of three. This type of bin is said to have come into use only since the Europeans came. The whole village is surrounded by banana trees, and mango trees are planted in the open spaces between the huts. Each village has one or more open-sided shelters where the men gather twice a day to eat their food... The cattle kraal is always sited outside the village boundary. All the beasts belonging to a village are kept in the common kraal; there are no individual kraals. The kraals are not substantial structures, but simple square palisades of long poles, projecting outwards at the top... The village has no obvious centre... A village is known by the name of the specific area of cultivation, which surrounds it. From time to time the huts are rebuilt on another site, when the old site is dirty or the huts dilapidated, but a village usually stands on the same site from about eight to ten years, and occasionally longer. The new site is always within the recognized area, which the village may use for cultivation. This permanence of site is related to the methods of cultivation. Each village has a shrine (kavua) dedicated to the ancestors of the headman, where the headman prays for the well being of the village. It is a small square structure with a thatched roof and open sides, and is usually to be found on a former village site. Pieces of calico are put on this shrine as an offering to the spirits (imipasi) of the ancestors. There is also a shrine in each hut, in the shape of a small clay pot (katindya) marked with whitewash. When beer is brewed, a little is always poured into this pot...” (9p16-18)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

Each village has one or more open-sided shelters where the men gather twice a day to eat their food... The open shelters are used as meeting places, and visitors are welcomed there. Some men have private shelters. The headman's hut is not noticeably larger than the others. However, many headmen now have brick houses, and these are immediately distinguishable. ” (9p17)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

Not found

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

“The core of a Mambwe village is the segment of an agnatic lineage of which the headman is usually the senior member. Round this core of agnatic kin are grouped a number of men of other clans linked to the core by various ties of kinship and marriage. Approximately half of the present headmen are members of one or another lineage of the royal clan, and thus claim agnatic kinship with the chiefs. The commoner headmen are almost invariably linked to the royal clan by cognatic or affinal ties. . . . The royal clan therefore dominates politically in the control of villages. Villages are grouped together within chieftaincies, and villages within the same chieftaincies are usually linked to one another and to the chief through the headmen. There are sixteen traditional chieftaincies, thirteen of whom have chiefs of the royal clan, but the British recognize only three chiefs, all of them royal. . . . The area of the plateau occupied by the Mambwe people is divided into two Native Reserves demarcated in 1928, together with some Native Trust Land. All Native Reserves in Northern Rhodesia are vested in the Secretary of State for the Colonies and are set apart in perpetuity for the exclusive use of occupation of the natives. No person, other than a native, is allowed to occupy any portion of a Native Reserve except for the following purposes. ” (9p16-18)

5.12 Trade:

According to Roberts the expansion of trade from c. 1700-c1840 is as follows, “Products most important for trade were local products which met everyday needs: foodstuffs, metalwork, pottery, clothing, cosmetics. There was no money, but some goods, such as wire, copper crosses, beads and cloth, were occasionally used as currency, since they were in general demand and could be exchanged for the goods which a buyer really wanted. There were no regular markets, but the courts of chiefs could serve as centres for redistributing the varied tribute levied from their subjects. [...] Local trade largely determined the capacity of Zambian societies to take part in long-distance trade. Patterns of local exchange and industry shaped and sustained the trade routes between the African interior and the coast. Conversely, the growth of coastal trade could stimulate the production of goods for consumption within African societies as well as goods for export overseas. [...] In this thickly wooded country iron was particularly important. There was little workable iron ore within Bemba country itself, but there were several sources on its borders. To the north both the Lungu and Mambwe were well known as iron workers.” (3p101)

“In pre-colonial Zambia “money itself was unknown, or an innovation associated with colonialism; barter was the predominant system of exchange. [...] The majority of wives in lower-income urban groups engage in petty trading as means of supplementing their husband’s low income-or insufficient contribution to the household pool income.” (5p173)

“The primary crops are maize (corn), millet, and sorghum. Coffee, tobacco, cotton, and sugarcane are important cash crops.” (6p1)

“Prosperous and industrious Mambwe wove cloth from their own cotton.” (2p112)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Yes

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

Not found

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

“The Mambwe accuse all successful men of practicing sorcery. If one man’s crops grow consistently better than those of his neighbours, the neighbours do not ascribe better crops to better methods of cultivation but to sorcery. It is not ploughs, but medicines, that bring higher yields. All successful traders are said to ‘know something’. (9p209)

6.2 Stimulants:

Not found

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

“Those with joking relationships are also obliged to bury each other. The burying clan attend the funeral of a joking clansman, dig the grave, and wash and inter the body. Each lineage of the royal clan has several joking partnerships with other clans, and these partners also slaughter the cow whose skin the dead body of a royal headman or chief must be wrapped. They also assist at the installation of an heir.” (9p138)

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

Not found

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Music (10)

“Traditionally, music was the most widely practiced art in their community. At any time of the day or night, some music was being made. Music was not made for its own sake. Music was functional. It was used for ceremonial, religious, political, or incidental purposes. Music was performed during funerals, to praise the departed, to console the bereaved, to keep people awake at night, to express pain and agony, and was also used during cleansing and chasing away of spirits.

Music was also played during ceremonies like beer parties, welcoming back the warriors from a war, during a wrestling match, and during courtship. [...]

These were performed both during communal work like building, weeding, etc. and individual work like pounding of cereals, or winnowing. Music was also used for ritual purposes like chasing away evil spirits who visit the village at night, in rain making, and during divinations and healing. Their music was shaped by the total way of life, lifestyles, and life patterns of individuals of this community. Because of that, the music had characteristics, which distinguished it from the music of other communities. [...]

This can be seen, heard, and felt in their melodies, rhythms, mode of presentation and dancing styles, movements, and formations.

The melodies in their music were lyrical, with a lot of vocal ornamentations. These ornaments came out clearly, especially when the music carried an important message. [...] Their rhythms were characterized by a lot of syncopation and acoustic beginning. These songs were usually presented in solo-response style, although some were solo performances. [...]

The most common forms of solo performances were chants. These chants were recitatives with irregular rhythms and phrases, which carried serious messages. [...]

Another unique characteristic in their music is the introduction of yet another chant at the middle of a musical performance. The singing stops, the pitch of the musical instruments go down and the dance becomes less vigorous as an individual takes up the performance is self praise.”

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

Not found

6.8 Missionary effect:

“British rule incorporated the Mambwe into a world-wide economic and political system, and changed their traditional mode of life [...] Traders and farmers followed the missionaries and were followed in turn by the industrial and mining companies. All these influenced Mambwe life, but perhaps the cash-economy itself has been the most important agency of change. As the Mambwe acquired money and substituted money for traditional media of exchange, almost every aspect of Mambwe life was affected [...] Before the Europeans came, rank and wealth were correlated: the chief acted as banker for his people, monopolized trade, and exacted tribute labour from his subjects. Today skilled men can earn money outside of the subsistence economy and independently of the chief’s influence. They invest this money in clothing and household goods, and, now that wages have risen, in better houses, ploughs, agricultural implements, and cattle.” (9p220)

“Of all the new ideas brought back to the tribal area, only one has so far seriously challenged the authority of the chief: the religious movement of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, commonly known as Jehovah’s Witnesses. This fundamentalist sect originated in the United States of America in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and from there spread all over the world. It now has a considerable following throughout the whole of Africa.” (9p197)

6.9 RCR revival:

Not found

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: (10p1)

“Death is a part of daily life for an African. In regions hit hard by the AIDS epidemic, families are often not able to afford the time or resources to follow traditional mourning and burial customs, which differ by religion and ethnic group. Among many ethnic groups, the "ancestors" assume an extremely important role. Ancestor spirits are remembered through various rituals and are believed to exert me significant influence on daily life. For example, at drinking occasions, so people pour a small libation of beer onto the ground in respect of the ancestors. In other cases, a small vessel of beer is left in a special location as an offering to the ancestors. In still other cases, sacrifices of a chicken or goat, for example, are made to the ancestors in ceremonies that vary according to ethnicity.”

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

Not found

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

Not found

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

“The Mambwe accuse all successful men of practicing sorcery. If one man’s crops grow consistently better than those of his neighbours, the nieghbours do not ascribe better crops to better methods of cultivation but to sorcery. It is not ploughs, but medicines, that bring higher yields. All successful traders are said to ‘know something’. (9p209)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

Not found

7.2 Piercings:

Not found

7.3 Haircut:

Not found

7.4 Scarification:

Not found

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

Animal hides were used (10p1)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

Not found

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

Not found

7.8 Missionary effect:

Not found

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

Not found

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

Not found

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

Not found

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

Not found

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

9.1 Wealth

There are no wealthy Mambwe, as wealth judged by Europeans. No Mambwe, chief or commoner, has yet managed to buy a motorcar. (9p221)

9.2 Adornment & Warfare

Information on adornment was particularly difficult to find, as well as information on warfare and weapons

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