

Chapter 4

Commemorating the Maji Maji War in Tanzania: The Case of Songea

Memories that were previously considered off-limits, because of the pain associated with the death of loved ones in losing a war, now gain resolution and become a viable landscape of meaning.¹

This chapter opens by quoting John Nelson above who, like other scholars, agree that war memories are increasingly gaining importance in the field of memory.² Although Nelson has studied the history of veneration of the war dead at Yusukuni Shinto Shrine in Japan, his argument is applicable in the case of the Maji Maji war (1905–1907), which pitted Africans against Germans in Southern Tanganyika and is the colonial event most remembered by the Ngoni people of Songea.³ They remember how their ancestors fought against the Germans in the Maji Maji war, how they were defeated, held prisoners of war and finally hanged. Their memory narratives reveal the historical development of veneration and commemoration of fallen war comrades. Similar to the Mau Mau war in Kenya or the Nama and Herero genocide in Namibia, the Maji Maji war, as examined in this chapter, has engendered post-colonial collective recollections of people whose ancestors were the victims of atrocities committed by colonial armies.⁴

1 John Nelson, “Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yusukuni Shinto Shrine”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 2, (2003), pp. 444–445.

2 A similar view is shared by Rosa Cabecinhas, “Conflicting Memories: Representations of the Colonial Past Among European and African Youths”, in Helena Goncalves da Silva, Adriana Alves de Paula Martins, Filomena Viana Guarda and Jose Miguel Sardica, *Conflict, Memory Transfers and the Reshaping of Europe* (Britain: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p. 1.

3 ‘The Ngoni were originally cattle-rearing Bantu people, linguistically related to the Swazi, Zulu and Xhosa’ of South Africa. Their presence in Songea and elsewhere is traced to the *Mfecane* wars in South Africa which caused northward migration of the Ngoni beginning in the mid-1840s. See, for example: Reinhard Klein-Arendt, “Bridging the Unbridgeable: Historical Traditions of the Ngoni of Northern Malawi”, in Wilhelm J.G. Möhlig, *Wortkunst und Dokumentartexte in Afrikanischen Sprachen*, Band 19 (Köln, Rüdiger Köppe Verlage, 2003), pp. 9–11; Andrew Roberts, “Political Change in the Nineteenth Century”, in I.N. Kimambo and A.J. Temu, *A History of Tanzania*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), pp. 68–69.

4 For these examples see Zimmerer, “Kolonialismus und Kollective Identität”, pp. 9–37; Id., “The First Genocide of the 20th Century”, in Deutsches Historisches Museum, *German Colonialism: Fragments Past and Present* (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2017), pp. 138–145. Annie E. Coombes, “Monumental Histories: Commemorating Mau Mau with the Statue of Dedan Kimathi”, *African Studies*, Vol. 70, No. 1, (2011), pp. 202–219.

This chapter explains the extent to which memories of the war in Songea exemplify Zoni Weisz's concept of "trans-generational transfer of war trauma."⁵ Trans-generational transfer of war trauma or transgenerational war memory is used in this study to mean war memories which have been handed down over generations via various forms of commemorations such as construction of war memorials or monuments. The chapter argues that war memorials in Songea started as secret Ngoni shrines in colonial times, which were gradually transformed into public memorial sites. The chapter is based on written sources and oral interviews collected in Songea. Those interviewed, mostly Ngoni elders, remember how commemoration of war heroes started and how they collaborated with the government to establish a national war museum in Songea. Their stories, as explained in this chapter, echo Michael Keren's argument that "veterans find it harder and harder to initiate acts of commemoration" because they often "feel orphaned."⁶ The discussion begins by reviewing the historiography of the Maji Maji war, followed by a brief discussion on how the war was, and still is, remembered at the national level and taught in schools. From there, the chapter analyzes Maji Maji memorial sites and commemoration events in Songea. It finally reveals the mounting pressure from the bereaved family members or descendants of war heroes and heroines, the so-called *vizazi via mashujaa*, for reparation and restitution.

In an attempt to bridge such an apparent research gap, this chapter examines the ways through which the Ngoni community remembers, commemorates and honours the dead of the Maji Maji war. The chapter supports the view that the traumatic events associated with the Maji Maji still linger in the minds of Ngoni people today. After independence, the Ngoni embarked on a project that was meant to honour their ancestors, who were publicly hanged by the Germans, by constructing a regional war museum. This museum was constructed at Mahenge in Songea, the grave site of Africans executed by the Germans in 1906. As revealed in the subsequent sections, however, it was not until 27th February 2006 that this regional war museum was declared a National War Museum.⁷ This belated declaration has seen

⁵ Zoni Weisz, Transgenerational Transfer of War Trauma within the Roma and Sinti Community", in Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Esteban Acuna C. and Piotr Trojanski, (eds), *Education For Remembrance of the Roma Genocide: Scholarship, Commemoration and the Role of Youth*, (Cracow, 2016), pp. 7–10.

⁶ For the concept of narrative memories see Michael Keren, "Introduction", in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds), *War Memory and Popular Culture: Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration* (USA: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2009), pp. 2–3.

⁷ Commemoration pamphlet by Songea Municipal Council (hereafter SMC), "The History of Maji Maji Museum", 2006.

the museum grow in importance as it commemorates Maji Maji on 27th February each year. Its management was overhauled and for the first time was manned by permanent salaried employees. Why was there such a dramatic change in the museum and why did it take place when it did? An attempt is made to answer this question by providing the history of the commemoration and veneration of war heroes in Songea.

A General Survey of the Historiography of the Maji Maji War

The Maji Maji war has been widely studied by historians and non-historians alike. Historians have reconstructed the history of Maji Maji, focusing on its social, economic, and political aspects. The net result of this scholarly endeavour has been the provision of a vast amount of historical knowledge of the war. Various studies have analyzed the impact of Maji Maji on political developments, local economies, the environment, diseases and the population.⁸ In recent years, there has been a renewed interest among scholars from fields other than history to analyze the war from its visual, literary and legal perspectives, bringing the subject much closer to memory history.⁹ A few students from the Department of History of the University of Dar es Salaam studying for a diploma in *Heritage Management and Tour Guidance* have focused their attention on Maji Maji memorial sites.¹⁰ Historians generally have shied away from analyzing collective memories of Maji Maji in Songea;

⁸ For diseases see, Musa Sadock, “The Maji Maji War and the Prevalence of Diseases in South-Eastern Tanzania, 1905–1910”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol. VII, No. 1, (2010), pp. 59–75.

⁹ For literary perspective see, E.S. Mwaifuge, “Art and History” in Ebrahim Hussein’s Kinjekitile, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol.VI, No. 2, (2009), pp. 26–46 and M.M. Mulokozi and Shani A. Kitogo, “Depiction and Impact of the Maji Maji War on Oral and Written Literature”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol.VI, No. 2 (2009), pp. 1–25 and Lilian Temu Osaki, “Imaginative Literature as History: Similarities and Differences in the Records of the Maji Maji War”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol. VII, No. 1, (2010), pp. 104–121. For visual perspective see, Nancy Rushohora and Eliane Kurmann, “Look at Majimaji! A Plea for Historical Photographs in Tanzania”, *African Studies*, Vol. 77, No. 1, (2018), pp. 87–104.

¹⁰ See for example, Maryciana A. Mapunda, “Management Plan of Maji Maji Memorial Museum Songea”, Unpublished dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, December 2006, pp. 1–15; Chachu P.M. Minogape, “A Tourist Circuit of Songea Municipality”, Unpublished dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, December, 2006, pp. 7–15 and Joachim J. Kazimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea, Southern Tanzania”, Unpublished dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, June, 2009, pp. 2–39.

those who have attempted to do so in their discussions are either too general in their approach or their content is limited.¹¹

The general historiography of Maji Maji started with colonial writers. The German Governor, Gustav Adolf von Götzen, made the first attempt to reconstruct the Maji Maji events. His work (*Deutsch-Ostafrika Aufstand 1905/06*) which Gwassa called “the classic colonial account of the war” was, in the view of nationalist historians, apologetic in outlook.¹² As a colonial leader, Götzen’s work was meant to justify colonial undertakings by “[. . .] legitimizing the brutality of colonial warfare under his governorship.”¹³ The next publication after Götzen was that of R.M. Bell, a British Colonial Officer, who published *The Maji Maji Rebellion in Liwale District* in 1941.¹⁴ Put simply, colonial narratives of the war had associated it with a rebellious attempt by a barbaric and superstitious group of Africans who, in the eyes of colonial officers, were the enemies of progress.¹⁵ Such a conspiracy theory, as John Iliffe calls it, is refuted on the grounds that it lacks concrete evidence.¹⁶

Gwassa admits that Maji Maji has passed through different phases of interpretation, thus posing “fundamental historiographical problems.”¹⁷ Whereas colonial narratives upheld the view that Maji Maji was “a fanatical and blind repudiation of the civilizing agents,” the post-colonial nationalist narratives emphasized the point that the war was actually an expression of Africans’ resentment against colonial domination and oppression.¹⁸ According to Elijah Greenstein, scholars and students researching on Maji Maji in the 1960s produced narratives which were in line with the politics of nation building.¹⁹ In fact, the historical knowledge produced by nationalist

11 According to Schmidt ‘historians have paid little attention to Songea’. See Heike Schmidt, “Deadly Silence Predominates in this District: The Maji Maji War and Its Aftermath in Ungoni”, in James Giblin and Jamie Monson (eds) *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Laiden: Brill, 2010), p. 187.

12 Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 20.

13 Schmidt, “Deadly Silence”, p. 185.

14 Schmidt, “Deadly Silence”, pp. 197–198. Archival evidence at hand indicates that Bell’s work appeared for the first time in Songea District Book. Seen in TNA, NA/24/1/2/II, Saving Telegram from Provincial Commissioner (Lindi) to Political (Songea), 14th September 1948.

15 Greenstein, *Making History*, p. 62.

16 John Iliffe, *Tanganyika Under German Rule, 1905–1912* (London: Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 21–22.

17 Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 21.

18 Gwassa, “The German Intervention”, p. 117; Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 19.

19 Elijah Greenstein, “Making History: Historical Narratives of the Maji Maji”, *Penn History Review*, Vol. 17, Issue 2, (2010), pp. 1–15.

historians in the late 1960s was “a history tailored to meet the needs of a new state and its new governing class.”²⁰ To support the politics of national unity and identity, for example, nationalist historians emphasized the role of *Maji* medicine in unifying the people of Tanganyika.²¹ However, this is not to downplay the fact that such nationalist historians wanted at the same time to refute colonial interpretation of Maji Maji which had dominated the history syllabus up to 1969.²²

To achieve the above goals, the Department of History of the then University College of Dar es Salaam under Terence Ranger (1964–1969) embarked on the Maji Maji Research Project between 1968 and 1969 involving university students.²³ The aim of this project, which was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, was to collect oral information on Maji Maji by undergraduate students from the southern regions.²⁴ The project saw a series of pamphlets published on the Maji Maji war. In 1968, Gwassa and John Iliffe edited *Records of the Maji Maji Rising Part One*, one of the earliest Maji Maji publications exclusively based on oral sources.²⁵ A year later, two students, O.B. Mapunda and G.P. Mpangara, working for the Maji Maji Research Project at the History Department of the University of Dar es Salaam, co-authored the first pamphlet on *The Maji Maji War in Ungoni*. This work was entirely based on oral information the authors had collected in Songea in 1966.²⁶ A groundbreaking Maji Maji work came from Gilbert Clement Kamana Gwassa, who did oral fieldwork for his PhD project on *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War* between 1966 and 1969. His aim was to reconstruct the

20 Henry Slater, “The Production of Historical Knowledge at Dar es Salaam: Thoughts on Two Recent Histories of Tanzania”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol 1. No. 2, (1992), p. 122. See also Jan Vansina, “The Use of Ethnographic Data as Sources for History”, in T.O. Ranger, *Emerging Themes in African History* (Kenya: East African Publishing House, 1968), p. xxi.

21 A thorough discussion on the extent to which the department of history was shaped by national policies of the 1960s is found in Kimambo, “Three Decades of Production of Historical Knowledge at Dar es Salaam”, pp. 1–19.

22 Yusufu Q. Lawi, “Pros and Cons of Patriotism in the Teaching of the Maji Maji War in Tanzania Schools”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol. VI, No. 2, (2009), p. 72.

23 Slater, *The Production of Historical Knowledge at Dar es Salaam*, p. 120.

24 Larson, “The Making of African History”, p. 8.

25 G.C.K. Gwassa and John Iliffe (eds), “Records of the Maji Maji Rising Part One”, *Historical Association of Tanzania*, No. 4, (1968), pp. 5–30.

26 See the review by Walter T. Brown, “Student Research on Maji Maji”, *TNR*, No. 72, (1973), pp. 99–100. See also O.B. Mapunda and G.P. Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, The University College, Dar es Salaam, 1969, p. 6.

history of the war from an African perspective or from what he called “oral reminiscences.”²⁷ His PhD thesis, published posthumously in 2005, became a seminal work. In its editorial preface, Wolfgang Apelt wrote: “at the time of preparing actions in connection with the anniversary of the Maji Maji War in the former colony of German-East Africa we encountered the doctoral thesis of Gilbert Clement Kamana Gwassa. We were amazed that it had not been published, although very often quoted.”²⁸ Gwassa’s work, like that of his contemporaries, was based on the nationalist perspective, which emphasized the role of Africans in resenting German oppressive policies in Tanganyika. As a whole, “an analysis of both the historiography that precedes the 1960’s narratives as well as the collection of seminar papers written by students at Dar es Salaam in 1968 indicates that the historical context in which these works were produced shaped their interpretation.”²⁹

In the late 1960s, when the subject of history had temporarily “enjoyed considerable popularity” in the country due to the “nationalist politics and ideology” of the time,³⁰ Maji Maji became an area of research that appealed to historians. In fact, scholars became increasingly focused on Maji Maji “because of its intrinsic historical interest” as well as “its perceived value in stimulating a sense of shared history and national consciousness . . .”³¹ In Dar es Salaam, efforts were made to reconstruct the history of Maji Maji and disseminate its knowledge beyond the university community. This was achieved through publishing seminar papers and newspaper articles. For example, five articles on Maji Maji featured in *Ngurumo*, a local newspaper, between September and October 1967. These articles provided a coherent account of how the war entered Songea and the subsequent predicament that befell the Ngoni community.³² *The Nationalist*

27 He interviewed a total of 81 informants from different places of southern Tanganyika. The texts were grouped according to areas from which they were collected which included Kilwa, Liwale, Masasi, Matumbi, Ngarambe, Ruvu, Samanga Ndumbo and Utete.

28 Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 5.

29 Greenstein, *Making History*, p. 1.

30 For this argument see Y.Q. Lawi, “Towards an understanding of the Basic Problems in the Teaching of History in Post-Colonial Tanzania”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol. 1, No. 4, (1996), pp. 1–2.

31 John William East, “The German Administration in East Africa: A Selected Annotated Bibliography of German Colonial Administration in Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi from 1884 to 1918”, Fellowship Thesis, Library Association of London, 1987, p. viii.

32 Edward Mhina, “Vita ya Maji Maji Omari Kinjalla Aongoza: Askari wa Peramiho Auwawa, *Ngurumo*”, No. 2841, September 2, 1967, p. 4; “Vita yaelekeea Songea”, *Ngurumo*, No. 2847, September, 9, p. 7; “Vita ya Maji Maji Songea: Omari Kinjalla Afika Songea”, *Ngurumo*, No. 2859, September 23rd, p. 4; “Vita ya Maji Maji-Songea: Bwana Shauri Mjerumani Atubu”, *Ngurumo*, No. 2876, October, 1967, p. 4; “Vita ya Maji Maji-Songea: Songea Yachomwa Moto”, *Ngurumo*, No. 2888, October, 28, p. 4.

published a story with the title: “On the Ashes of Maji Maji Our New Nation was founded.”³³

The foregoing pace of publications and publicity of Maji Maji, which continued through the 1970s, slackened in subsequent decades. During this period not much was written to challenge what James Giblin and Jamie Monson call “compelling” and “persuasive” accounts of Maji Maji.³⁴ However, the publication of *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* in 2010 tilted the scales.³⁵ The book prompted fresh research, the findings of which challenged the authoritative nationalist narratives. In fact, the nationalist conception of Maji Maji as solely an anti-colonial movement was faulted. The critics of nationalist narratives see political tension within and between Maji Maji societies, which equally contributed to the eruption and spread of the Maji Maji war.³⁶ As a result, “the monolithic statist interpretations” [of Maji Maji], argues Koponen, “are eroding and giving way to a post-colonialist predilection of seeing Maji Maji as a contingent collection of local uprisings and struggles.”³⁷ One thing is certain as far as this discussion is concerned. Although the study of Maji Maji cuts across social disciplines, historians have seldom addressed its collective memory, that is, its cultural and communicative memories. These historians have frequently used the social memory of the war as their methodology, but not in a noticeable way as the object of their study.

³³ Seen in Greenstein, *Making History*, p. 64.

³⁴ James Giblin and Jamie Monson, “Introduction”, in Id., *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Laiden: Brill, 2010), p. 2.

³⁵ Giblin and Monson, “Introduction”, pp. 1–5.

³⁶ For details see, Alexander De Juan, “State Extraction and Anti-Colonial Rebellion: Quantitative Evidence from the Former German East Africa”, GIGA Working Papers, No. 271, April 2015, p. 10; Jamie Monson, “Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, 1870–1918”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 39, (1998), No. 1, pp. 95–120; Juhan Koponen, “Maji Maji in the Making of the South”, *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal Historical Research and Writing*, Vol VII No. 1, (2010), pp. 1–58; Seth I. Nyagava, “Were the Bena Traitors?: Maji Maji in Njombe and the Context of Local Alliances made by the Germans”, in James Giblin and Jamie Monson (eds), *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Laiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 241–257; James Giblin, “Taking Oral Sources Beyond the Documentary Record of Maji Maji: The Example of the War of Korosani at Yakobi, Njombe”, in James Giblin and Jamie Monson (eds), *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Laiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 259–290.

³⁷ Koponen, “Maji Maji in the Making of the South”, p. 56. The organizational principles adopted by the Maji Maji fighters owed their origins to cultural, political and economic forces. See, for example, John Iliffe, “The Maji Maji Rebellion”, in Robert O. Collins, James McDonald Burns and Erik Kristofer Ching (eds), *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1994), pp. 236–243.

Remembering Maji Maji at the National Level: Maji Maji as a National Epic

The notion that Maji Maji was a national epic was widely proclaimed by nationalist historians.³⁸ But what does this concept mean? The following definition answers this question:

A national epic is an epic poem or a literary work of epic scope which seeks or is believed to capture and express the essence or spirit of a particular nation; not necessarily a nation state, but at least an ethnic or linguistic group with aspirations for independence or autonomy. National epics frequently recount the origin of a nation, a part of its history, or a crucial event in the development of national identity, such as other national symbols.³⁹

In the light of the above definition, Maji Maji as a historical event (not an epic poem or a literary work as described above) can be conceived as “one of the beginnings of the struggle for lost independence” and the foundation of national unity and identity.⁴⁰ The Maji Maji war, unlike the former resistance to colonialism, was multi-ethnic resistance with wider territorial coverage and long-lasting social, political and economic consequences.⁴¹ Nationalist narratives describe Maji Maji as large-scale African resistance to colonial exploitation and oppression that erupted in colonial Tanganyika. According to nationalist historians, Maji Maji was a rigorous attempt to achieve independence from German colonial rule and therefore an expression of African unity and integrity.⁴² “Nationalism in Tanganyika”, wrote M.H.Y. Kaniki, “[had] its roots in the distant past . . .”⁴³

The nationalist historians writing in the late 1960s and afterwards described Maji Maji as the event which inspired and shaped the nationalist struggle. Their main argument is that the war broke out because Africans had rejected colonial exploitation and oppression.⁴⁴ In this war, they see Africans resenting the forced cultivation of cotton, the enforced payment of colonial taxes and forced labour. They

³⁸ Gwassa and Iliffe, “Records of the Maji Maji Rising”, p. 2; Gwassa, “The German Intervention”, p. 117; Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 20.

³⁹ <https://www.definitions.net>, last accessed on 5th February 2023. See similar description of a national epic in Gauti Kristmannsson, “The Epic Nature of the Nation: the Need for an Epic in European National Literature”, in *Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien*, Band 6, (2012), pp. 87–88.

⁴⁰ Gwassa, The German Intervention, p. 117.

⁴¹ Gwassa and Iliffe, “Records of the Maji Maji Rising”, p. 19.

⁴² See, for example, A.J. Temu, “The Rise and Triumph of Nationalism”, in I.N. Kimambo and A.J. Temu (eds), *A History of Tanzania* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), p. 189.

⁴³ M.H.Y. Kaniki, “The End of the Colonial Era”, in Id., (ed), *Tanzania under Colonial Rule* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), p. 347.

⁴⁴ Lawi, “Pros and Cons of Patriotism”, p. 76.

also see Africans resisting the harassment and maltreatment inflicted upon them by the *Akidas* and *Jumbes*, who worked as German agents or supervisors. They saw Maji Maji as an anti-colonial movement organized collectively by societies of southern Tanganyika, drawing its organizational strength from *maji* ideology. Africans at Matumbi rose up against the Germans encouraged by the power of Kinjekitile Ngwale's *maji* medicine, which was believed to change bullets into water. The supposedly miraculous power of this war medicine encouraged local people to fight against the Germans and their loyalists. From Matumbi, the war spread like wild fire, expanding as far west as Songea and as far north as Dar es Salaam. In this war, Africans were the losers; roughly 120,000 Africans died. Crops were burnt, houses demolished, families disrupted and political units destroyed. The war devastated the southern societies of Tanganyika, affecting them politically and economically and leaving the majority of Africans psychologically affected. Though the Africans lost the war, the spirit of the war was rekindled by the nationalist politics of the 1950s. Maji Maji and other forms of African resistance predating it was therefore a precursor to the nationalist struggles of the 1950s, by which the independence of Tanganyika was achieved.⁴⁵ Such is the conventional narrative of Maji Maji which nationalist historians have endeavored to uphold.

As argued earlier, Maji Maji was among the traumatic colonial events that could not be forgotten by those who had experienced it or by those who knew about it through those who had fought or witnessed it. Nyerere is remembered for having said: "memories of the Hehe and Maji Maji wars against the German colonialists, and of their ruthless suppression, were deeply engrained in the minds of our people."⁴⁶ A similar view is shared by Giblin and Monson, who agree that the war was "an event with long-term consequences."⁴⁷ "It was [therefore] impossible," Gwassa added, "for the people to forget the [Maji Maji War] and the frightfulness and ruthlessness of the colonial power" because "it left shattered memories."⁴⁸

Not surprisingly, the nationalist struggle, organized by Tanganyika African Association (TAA) and afterwards by Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), was aimed at achieving independence peacefully, and not leading to similar troubles caused by Maji Maji. In one of his speeches Nyerere talked about how some elders remained skeptical of TANU's campaign for independence. They asked

⁴⁵ John Mtwale Kasembo, *Miaka Hamsini ya Uhuru wa Tanzania Bara: Tulikotoka, Tulipo na Tanakokwenda* (Kenya: Franciscan Kolbe Press, 2011), p. 40. According to Kasembo, "the blood of the freedom fighters is the seed of our national independence."

⁴⁶ Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity*, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Giblin and Monson, "Introduction", p. 1.

⁴⁸ Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 20.

him: “How can we win without guns? How can we make sure that there is not going to be a repetition of the Hehe and Maji Maji wars?”⁴⁹ In Songea, the elders “were very suspicious of the TANU movement”, for they feared that TANU was engaging in events that would lead to another catastrophe like the Maji Maji war.⁵⁰ Such expressions of fear, which have been described at length in chapter one, are not difficult to account for. The fact of the matter is that struggles for independence took place at the time when memories of the horrors of the Maji Maji war still lingered in the minds of those who had fought it.⁵¹ In December 1956, Nyerere addressed the 579th meeting of the fourth Committee of the UN Security Council thus:

As you know our country was once a Germany colony. The Germans first began to occupy the country in 1885. For fifteen years, between 1885 and 1900, my people, with bows and arrows, with spears and clubs, with knives or rusty muskets fought desperately to keep the Germans out. But the odds were against them. In 1905 in the famous Maji Maji rebellion, they tried again for the last time to drive the Germans out. Once again the odds were against them. The Germans, with characteristic ruthlessness, crushed the rebellion, slaughtering an estimated number of 120,000 people. The people fought because they did not believe in the white man's right to govern and civilize the black. They rose in great rebellion not through fear of a terrorist movement or a superstitious oath, but in response to a natural call, a call of the spirit ringing in the hearts of all men, and of all times, educated and uneducated, to rebel against foreign domination. The struggle against the Germans proved to our people the futility of trying to drive out their masters by force. They were left without hope.⁵²

Memories of Maji Maji and those of other rebellions were evoked in the 1950s “in defence of African liberation and as a source of legitimacy for the fledgling Tanganyika nation.”⁵³ Similar to the Mau Mau war in Kenya, collective memories of Maji Maji were used by nationalist leaders to authenticate the nationalist movement in Tanganyika.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity*, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Subira H. Kumbuka, “TANU in Songea District”, Unpublished Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 1974, pp. 8–10.

⁵¹ This fear is also explained by the fact that the slogans used in the Maji Maji War and TANU movement resembled: “Machi-Machi” or “Mbyu-Mbyu” for Maji Maji and “Uhuru-Uhuru” or “Kazi-Kazi” for TANU. Seen in Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, p. 29.

⁵² Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity*, pp. 40–41.

⁵³ Greenstein, *Making History*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Gwassa, *The Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 288.

Memories of Maji Maji after Independence

Maji Maji continued to be remembered and often mentioned in speeches after independence. In a statement he made in 1962 Nyerere cited Maji Maji as the foundation of national unity.⁵⁵ Within TANU party, the Maji Maji had become a symbolic event to be honoured by party members. For example, “in the October 1967 TANU conference in Mwanza, delegates were asked to observe a minute’s silence to remember those who died in the Maji Maji movement.”⁵⁶ This act of commemorating freedom fighters at party level paralleled what Oscar S. Kambona, the then Minister for External Affairs and Defence, once remarked:

The blood that was shed and the suffering that was endured are today Africa’s advocates for freedom and unity. Those men who refused to accept the judgment passed upon them by the colonizers, who held unswervingly through the darkest hours to a vision of an Africa emancipated from political, economic and spiritual domination will be remembered and revered whenever Africans meet.⁵⁷

Thus, “as an authoritative text, the Maji Maji story was particularly important during Tanzania’s post-independence period,”⁵⁸ and as a mass movement uniting several ethnic groups, Maji Maji was “one of the pillars of nationalism in Tanzania.”⁵⁹ Those who lost their lives fighting the war were (as now) remembered and honoured as heroes.⁶⁰ More often than not, Maji Maji is mentioned in speeches made by government leaders during Independence Day. When addressing the public on 9 December 2001 on the anniversary of forty years of independence, for example, President Benjamin William Mkapa remarked: “we Africans opposed colonial rule right from the beginning and today it is good that we remember (in a grateful way) the former freedom fighters like Abushiri and Bwana Heri of Uzigua [. . .] and *the heroes of the Maji Maji War, 1905 – 1907.*”⁶¹ Five years later, when the country

⁵⁵ See the quotation by Gwassa, *The Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, pp. 289–290 as cited in John Iliffe, “Reflections on the Maji Maji Rebellion,” *Spearhead*, Vol. 1, (1962) p. 21 and *The Nationalist, TANU Daily*, Dar es Salaam, 31st July 1965.

⁵⁶ Gwassa, “The German Intervention”, p. 118; Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 21.

⁵⁷ Haile Selassie as cited by the Hon. Oscar S. Kambona, the Minister for External Affairs and Defence, in “Tanganyika at the United Nations: Speeches made by Tanganyikan Delegates to the 18th Session of the United Nations General Assembly” (undated), p. 11.

⁵⁸ Monson, *Relocating Maji Maji*, p. 97.

⁵⁹ Gwassa, *The Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 289.

⁶⁰ Gwassa, *The Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 289.

⁶¹ “Hotuba ya Rais wa Jamhuri wa Muungano wa Tanzania, Mheshimiwa Benjamini William Mkapa, Kwenye Sherehe za Miaka 40 ya Uhuru wa Tanzania Bara, Uwanja wa Taifa, Dar es Salaam, 9 Desemba 2001” (no page).

celebrated its forty five years of independence, President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete reiterated the role played by the Maji Maji fighters and other chiefs in different parts of the country in pioneering the struggle for independence.⁶² Again, during the fifty years' celebration of *Uhuru* in December, 2011, Maji Maji was not only mentioned but also a poem was composed.⁶³

71. Wadachi hawakutulia Amani hawakujulia Kusini uliibukia Uasi wa kihistoria	71. The Germans were restless, As they did not see peace, In the south a, Historic Rebellion had erupted.
72. Mdachi katangazia Kila Kijiji kusikia Pamba kujilimia Na kodi kulipia	72. The Germans announced, To each village to hear that They should cultivate cotton, And pay taxes
73. Mababu wakachukia Jerumani kumtumikia Kinjekitile kusikia Mizimu kumshukia	73. The ancestors were angry about Serving the Germans, As soon as Kinjekitile heard this, The Ancestral spirits revealed to him.
74. Uasi ukalipukia Mahenge na Kilwa pia Rufiji Uliifika Umatumbi kuingia	74. The rebellion broke out, At Mahenge and Kilwa, It reached Rufiji and, Entered Umatumbi
75. Chabruma kaingia Lumecha kupigania Na mashujaa mamia Nchi walipigania!	75. Chabruma joined it to Fight for Lumecha, And hundreds of heroes Fought for this country!

One should remember that the poem above was the continuation of Maji Maji poetic accounts, which were published in the colonial period.⁶⁴ The oldest poem was written by Hemedi bin Abdallah, *Utenzi wa Vita vy a Wadachi* in 1908. It "contains

62 "Hotuba ya Rais wa Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, Mheshimiwa Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Kwenye Sherehe za Kuadhimisha Miaka 45 ya Uhuru wa Tanzania Bara, Uwanja wa Taifa, Dar es Salaam, Tarehe 09 Desemba, 2006" (no page).

63 M.M. Mwanakijiji, "Utenzi wa Miaka Hamsini ya Tanzania, 1961–2011: Kutamalaki kwa Taifa Miaka 50 ya Uhuru", 5th December 2011 (no page).

64 In most of the African countries, especially Namibia, praise poems are frequently composed to glorify past wars of independence. Seen in Melber, "Namibia, Land of the Brave", pp. 308–321.

an explanation of the rebels' defeat" and inefficacy of the magic water.⁶⁵ Another poem by Abdul Karim bin Jamaliddin, *Utenzi wa Vita vya Maji Maji*, was translated into German and English in 1933 and 1958 by A. Lorenz (a German schoolteacher) and W.H. Whitely, respectively.⁶⁶ The latter poem, published posthumously, shows how the war was expressed in Kilwa and Lindi, and is "a unique document for studying the social and cultural history of the Swahili people in the last years of German rule in East Africa."⁶⁷ It can therefore be argued that individual government leaders, historians and poets have held the view that Maji Maji was a national epic.

Maji Maji in Schools

History textbooks, argues Isurin, reflect and influence collective memories of a nation in which such books are used.⁶⁸ Maji Maji as a topic of study in the school syllabi started in the 1950s when Tanganyika was still under British colonial rule.⁶⁹ The topic was, for obvious reasons, partially taught in classrooms and it is noteworthy that pupils were made to believe that Maji Maji was never a *war* but rather a *rebellion*, the notion which is now under attack.⁷⁰ In their lessons, however, some African teachers employed in colonial schools challenged this interpretation of Maji Maji, which reduced it to an act of rebellion rather than a massive African war of independence.⁷¹ The colonial history syllabus was by and large prejudiced against Maji Maji and the idea was to suppress anti-colonial sentiments among African youth. It is unfortunate that the colonial rendering of Maji

⁶⁵ Casco, *Utenzi*, pp. 256–289. According to Casco, political poetry became famous beginning in the 1960s. Examples of such poems were: *Utenzi wa Jamhuri ya Muungano* (The Poem of the United Republic) by Ramadhani Mwaruka; *Utenzi wa Zinduko la Ujamaa* (Poem of the Establishment of Ujamaa) by Zuberi Kamali Lesso (1972), *Utenzi wa Ukombozi wa Zanzibar* (Poem of the Liberation of Zanzibar) by Muhammed Seif Khatib (1975) as well as *Utenzi wa Vita vya Kagera* (Poem of the Kagera War) by Henry R. Muhanika.

⁶⁶ Miehe, et al, *Kala Shairi*, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Casco, *Utenzi*, p. 256.

⁶⁸ Isurin, *Collective Remembering*, p. 17.

⁶⁹ Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", p. 69.

⁷⁰ Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", p. 70. Some writers have continued to hold the view that Maji Maji was not a war but rather an uprising. Their main argument is that the Maji Maji fighters did not target the German colonial state but its "subordinates" and "supporters" such as individual Europeans, Akidas, Jumbes, missionaries, Askaris, Indians and Arabs. See, for example, Miehe, et al, *Kala Shairi*, pp. 24–25; Jamie Monson, "Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania 1870–1918", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 39, No. 1, (1998), p. 96.

⁷¹ Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", p. 72.

Maji in schools remained intact until the late 1960s when the school syllabi were changed to suit the newly adopted policy of self-reliance.⁷² From that period on, nationalist narratives of Maji Maji, which sharply contrasted colonial narratives, became an important entry in schools' history syllabi.⁷³

The current history syllabi for primary schools show that lessons on Maji Maji begin in standard five, when pupils are taught the basic knowledge of the war like its timing, organization, causes and effects.⁷⁴ Evidence shows that during the 1980s children in primary schools were required to master the knowledge of the Maji Maji war by demonstrating, among others, skills in drawing maps of the areas covered by the war.⁷⁵ The 1985 history syllabus instructed history teachers to invite, whenever possible, elders who had witnessed or participated in Maji Maji to come to the schools to share their memories of the war with pupils.⁷⁶ In so doing, communicative memories of the war could be incorporated in the elementary school curriculum, thereby representing social memory of Maji Maji War.⁷⁷

Providing knowledge of the war in primary and secondary schools in post-colonial Tanzania not only raised youth's awareness of the German colonial past, but also served the purpose of promoting their patriotism and heroism.⁷⁸ Some primary and secondary schools organized (and still do) trips to visit Maji Maji sites in different parts of the country.⁷⁹ Ndunguru Gerold, the Headmaster of Chabruma Secondary School in Songea (see Figure 5), revealed that his school organizes trips to the Majimaji Memorial Museum⁸⁰ in Songea for his students to learn about

72 Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", p. 73–75.

73 Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", pp. 73–77.

74 For evidence see history textbooks for primary schools like those written by N.K. Ndosi, *Tujifunze Historia Darasa la 5* (Dar es Salaam: Educational Books Publishers Ltd, 2008), pp. 100–103; Juma Azika, *Historia Darasa la Saba: Kitabu cha Mwanafunzi 6* (Dar es Salaam: Macmillan Aidan Ltd, 2010) p. 37; See also Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", p. 77.

75 See, for example, J.F. Mbwiliza et.al, *Historia Shule za Msingi: Kiongozi cha Mwalimu, Taasisi ya Elimu Tanzania* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam Publishing House, 1985), p. 29. An important textbook that was used for teaching the Maji Maji War in primary schools was written by J.F. Mbwiliza e.t. al (eds), *Historia Shule za Msingi: Jamii za Watanzania Tangu Mwaka 1880, Taasisi ya Elimu*, Chapa ya Pili (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1984), pp. 19–26.

76 Mbwiliza, *Historia Shule za Msingi*, pp.19–26.

77 A thorough discussion on the concept of social representation of history can be seen in Cabeçinhas, "Conflicting Memories", p. 260.

78 An articulate discussion on patriotic rendering of Maji Maji in post-colonial Tanzania has been done by Lawi, "Pros and Cons of Patriotism", pp. 78–86.

79 "Mhifadhi Kiongozi Makumbusho ya Taifa ya Maji Maji", <http://www.matukiodaima.co.tz/2013/04/>, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

80 This site will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

the war and appreciate the role of the freedom fighters.⁸¹ Gerold remarked: “we want our students to realize the connection our school has with Maji Maji; we want them to be aware of the fact that their school is named after a Maji Maji hero, who is Chabruma.”⁸² Gerold believes that visiting the museum each year gives his students a better understanding of the history of Maji Maji.

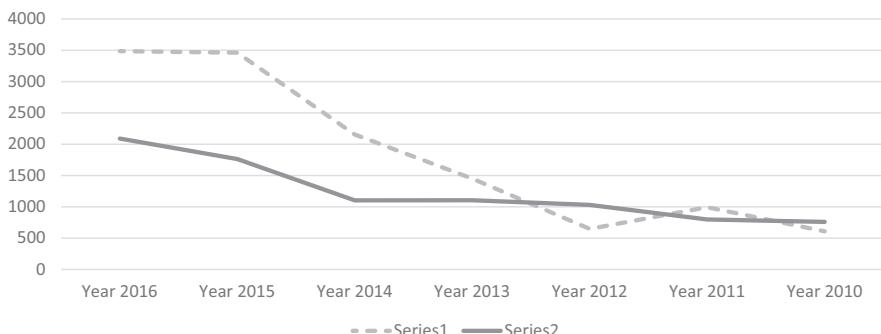
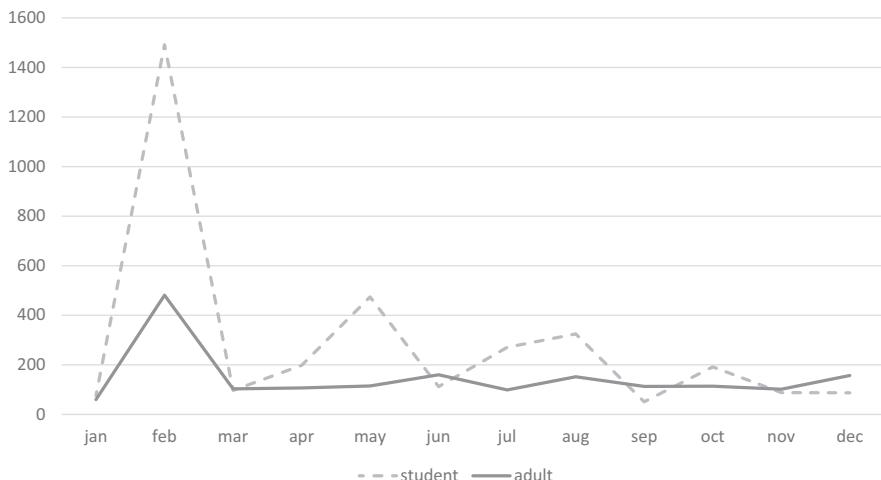


Figure 4a and 4b: 4a) Students who visited the Majimaji Memorial Museum in 2015. 4b) Tanzanians who visited the Majimaji Memorial Museum between 2010 and 2016.

⁸¹ Interview with Ndunguru Gerold, Lilambo B, Songea, 28th September 2017.

⁸² Interview with Ndunguru Gerold, Lilambo B, Songea, 28th September 2017.

It is therefore evident, as Gail Weldon reports in the case of South Africa, that teaching history in Tanzanian schools is done in such a way that it promotes the culture of remembering past traumatic events rather than forgetting them.⁸³ This kind of education has increased students' awareness of Majimaji Museum when they visit it each year. As shown in Figures 4a and 4b above, the number of students who visited the museum between 2010 and 2016 increased from 671 to 3,486, with an average of 1,839 students visiting it annually.⁸⁴ These statistics exclude the 87 foreign students who visited the museum at that time.⁸⁵ The first graph suggests that the highest number of students visited the museum in 2015. The second graph indicates that between 2014 and 2016 there was a marked increase in the number of Tanzanians who visited it for various purposes.



Figure 5: Chabruma Secondary School named after *Nkosi Chabruma* of Ungoni.
Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

⁸³ Gail Weldon, "South Africa and Rwanda: Remembering or Forgetting?" in Robert Guyver (ed), *Teaching History and the Changing Nation State: Transnational and International Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2016), p. 108.

⁸⁴ MMM, Visitors Annual Report from January 2016 to December 2016 (no page).

⁸⁵ MMM, Visitors Annual Report from January 2016 to December 2016.

Maji Maji Memorial Sites and Commemorative Events in Songea

This section introduces the important Maji Maji memorial sites in Songea, most notably Majimaji Memorial Museum the location of which is shown on Map 2 below. It describes this site and provides its historical background by explaining how the Maji Maji war reached Songea. The purpose is to show how and why the Ngoni chiefs (*Nkosis*) and sub-chiefs (*Ndunas*) joined the war, and how, finally, they were defeated, pursued, imprisoned, and hanged. The discussion covers the long history of commemorating war heroes and heroines as practised by the Ngoni. At the end it reveals the extent to which the proliferation of acts of commemoration and veneration of the war dead has inflamed feelings of the need for reparation and restitution.

Majimaji Memorial Museum, famously called the *hero-square*, which was constructed during the 1960s was officially opened on 6 July 1980.⁸⁶ The museum (see Figure 6 below) is located in Songea town, walking distance from the current location of Songea Regional Office. The site of the museum is where the Maji Maji war captives are buried. Records show that more than sixty people, including some Ngoni chiefs and sub-chiefs, were executed on 27th February 1906.⁸⁷ The hanging site, locally called *kinyongeoni*, is near the Regional Commissioner's Office. The site (see Figure 7 below) is an extension of the present Majimaji Memorial Museum. On this small piece of land stands a tower with the names of all the people who were hanged. There is also a hanging stand, comprising two vertical wooden poles standing apart and joined together on top with a wooden crossbar on which four hanging ropes are tied.⁸⁸

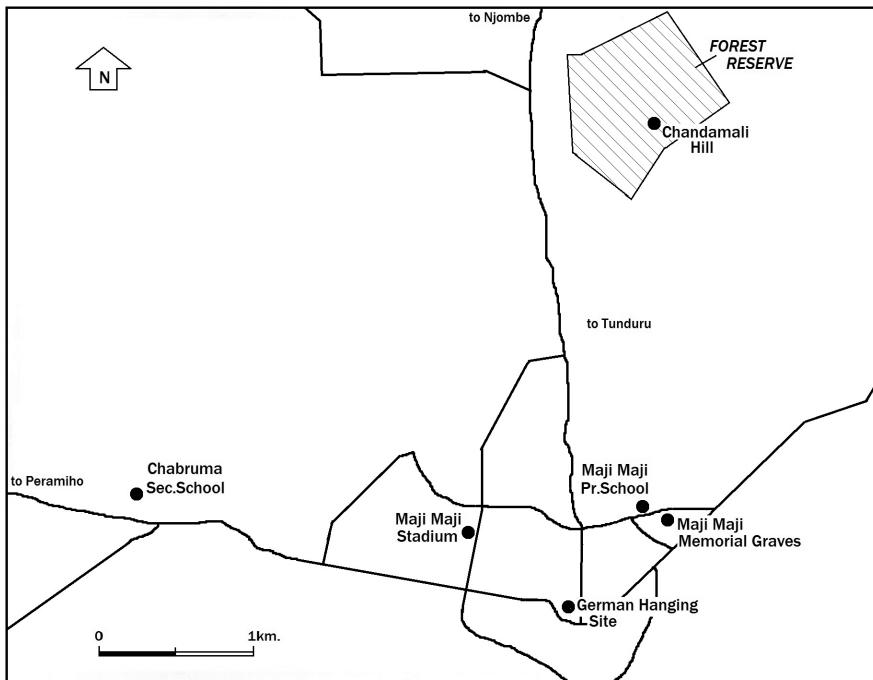
Inside the museum site is a small roundish building which is used as an ethnographic hall.⁸⁹ Next to it stands a dome-like one-storey building that is used for museum activities, and adjacent to it is another building housing offices. At the entrance of the museum building stands a concrete-roofed, non-walled building, which had sheltered the statue of the Nyerere. In front of the museum building is a huge statue of an Askari facing twelve life-sized busts of Ngoni chiefs and sub-chiefs. Behind the museum is a mass grave of Maji Maji war heroes and heroines who were hanged by the Germans. Next to this mass grave is the grave of *Nduna*

⁸⁶ Kazimoto, "Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea", p. 2; "Mhifadhi Kiongozi Makumbusho ya Taifa ya Maji Maji", <http://www.matukiodaima.co.tz/2013/04/>, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

⁸⁷ The second day for execution, according to Father Ebner was 12th April 1906. Fr. Elzear Ebner, OSB, *The History of the Wangoni* (Peramiho: Benedictine Publications Ndanda-Peramiho, 1987), p. 143.

⁸⁸ The tower stands right at the site where the hanging tree stood. The tree collapsed due to old age. See, for example, <http://www.matukiodaima.co.tz/2013/04/>, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

⁸⁹ The description of the museum is based on the researcher's field observation.



Map 2: The Distribution of Maji Maji Memorial Sites in Songea. Map created for this study by Costa Mahuwi. Map: © Costa Mahuwi.

Songea Mbano who was also hanged by the Germans. Over the entrance to the museum is a huge concrete arch bearing the Swahili words: *Karibu Makumbusho ya Maji Maji*, viz., “welcome to the Maji Maji Memorial.”

The history of Majimaji Memorial Museum, as its name suggests, owes its origin to the era of the Maji Maji war, which was fought in Songea between 1905 and 1906. The literature shows that Maji Maji skirmishes, which started at Matumbi, expanded westward to Songea, where severe battles between the Ngoni and Germans were fought. News of the war reached Songea through the Ngoni traders who used to trade with the coastal people.⁹⁰

Explanations on how the war entered Songea are provided by historians. A well-known account maintains that the war reached Songea through the influence of a Maji Maji medicine man from Liwale called Omari Kinjala,⁹¹ who was commissioned

⁹⁰ Gwassa, *The Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 60.

⁹¹ Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, p. 15.



Figure 6: A view of Majimaji War Museum from its Entrance.

Photo: Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.



Figure 7: The hanging site monument (*kinyongeoni*). Note the hanging stand on the left.

Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

by his community to bring *maji* medicine to Songea as a punishment for his refusal to take the medicine when it was introduced to him.⁹² The medicine, as already mentioned, was believed to turn German bullets into water. To make his medicine accepted by the Ngoni, Kinjala temporarily married Mkomanile, the only woman sub-chief (*nduna*) in Ngoni territory.⁹³ With this marriage or whatever it is called by other scholars,⁹⁴ Kinjala was able to persuade *Nkosi Chabruma*, whose wife served as a sub-chief (*nduna*), to prepare for the coming of the Maji Maji war by making him accept and believe in *maji* medicine.⁹⁵ However, it seems that *Nkosi Chabruma* did not trust the efficacy of Kinjala's war medicine in the first place. He consulted his own medicine men and his war diviners for advice before accepting Kinjala's medicine.⁹⁶ He also took time to test the medicine, first on a dog and second on a man, and in both cases the medicine failed to work as the dog and the man died instantly from the bullets fired at them.⁹⁷ Kinjala's justification for the failure was attributed to the violation of the instructions given.⁹⁸ However, having made up his mind to fight, *Nkosi Chabruma* accepted the medicine as he was made to believe that it would only work on the battleground. He encouraged his subordinates to take the medicine and afterwards summoned *Nkosi Gama*, who also accepted the magic medicine⁹⁹ At this point, preparations for the war were now over.

Having tested the efficacy of the *maji* medicine, the Ngoni Chiefs, *Nkosi Chabruma* of Mshape in the North and *Nkosi Mputa bin Gwezerapasi Gama* of Njelu in the South, waged war against the German community in Songea by engaging the services of *nduna* Songea Mbano, who was the commander-in-chief (*Nduna* above all *Ndunas*).¹⁰⁰ The rest of the *Ndunas* in Mbano's chiefdom were Mgendera Mawaso Gama, Kahongo Magagura, Mputa Mkuzo Gama, Magodi Mbamba Mbano and Mtekateka

92 Schmidt, "Deadly Silence", p. 196.

93 Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 15; Philipo Maligisu as interviewed by Yasinta Ngonyani, "Historia: Songea Mbano Kiongozi Shujaa wa Wangoni Anayestahili Kuenziwa Daima", www.ruhuwiko.blogspot.co.tz, last accessed on 15th January 2016.

94 Schmidt discusses the contradictions arising in various studies as regards the relationship between Kinjala and Mkomanile. See, for example, Schmidt, "Deadly Silence", pp. 197–199.

95 Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni*, pp. 133–136; Gwassa, *Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, pp. 59–60; Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 15.

96 Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 15.

97 Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 21.

98 Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 21.

99 Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 19; Schmidt, "Deadly Silence", p. 199.

100 Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni*, pp. 134–135; Gwassa, *Rise and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 55.

Muyamuya Tawete, Fratela Fusi Gama, Maji ya Kuhanga Komba, Zimanimoto Gama, Mpambalyo Soko Msalawani, Mtepa Hawaya Gama and Mkomanile.¹⁰¹

It is arguable whether the *maji* medicine alone could have caused the outbreak of the Maji Maji war in Songea. There were other underlying factors. The literature tells us that news of the war had reached Ungoni at the time when *Nkosi* Mputa Gama had issues with the authority of Peramiho mission which was under the Benedictine missionaries of St. Otilien from Bavaria.¹⁰² Father Francis Leuthner from the mission had set ablaze a sacred traditional prayer hut (*ma-hoka*) of the Ngoni people at Maposeni (Gama's home base),¹⁰³ which to them was an intolerable abomination. *Nkosi* Gama was greatly disappointed in him. Of course, Leuthner's action was motivated by the fact that the whole concept of the prayer hut was at variance with Christian doctrine, which forbids ancestor worship like that of the Ngoni.¹⁰⁴ Added to this tension was German exploitative policies, such as forced labour and taxation, which explains why the Ngoni fought against the Germans soon after the arrival of Kinajala with his *maji* medicine.¹⁰⁵ Although the colonial authorities in Songea had resolved this conflict by having the mission pay compensation, *Nkosi* Gama was not satisfied. This became evident when he ordered his warriors to attack the mission soon after the outbreak of the Maji Maji war in Songea. Peramiho church as shown in Figures 8 and 9 below was burnt down on 9th December 1905 and Father Francis was killed at Maposeni where his memorial cross stands today. The rest of the Benedictine missionaries at the mission fled to Kigonsera where they took refuge.¹⁰⁶

It should be noted however that the first military confrontation in Songea took place on 3rd September 1905 between *Nkosi* Chabruma of Ngoni Mshape and the German soldiers,¹⁰⁷ when 200 Ngoni were killed. Just as this battle took place, *Nkosi* Gama of Njelu attacked the fort of Rashid Masudi, an Arab resident who

¹⁰¹ John Nditi, "Songea Walivyoweka Historia Katika Vita ya Maji Maji", <https://habarileo.co.tz/habari/2019-02-035cae1c5da.aspx>, last accessed on 4th February 2019.

¹⁰² Kanisa Katoliki Tanzania (hereafter KKT), *Jubilei ya Miaka 150 ya Uinjilishaji Tanzania* (Dar es Salaam: Desk Top Productions Limited (DTP, 2018), pp. 2–5.

¹⁰³ Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", pp. 14–15.

¹⁰⁴ Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 15; Karim F. Hirji, "Colonial Ideological Apparatuses in Tanganyika under the Germans", in M.H.Y. Kaniki (ed), *Tanzania under Colonial Rule* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), p. 197.

¹⁰⁵ Hirji, "Colonial Ideological Apparatuses", pp. 12–15. The Ngoni were also subjected to harsh punishment like flogging by using a cane locally called *Mbalamatora*. Their cattle could be confiscated as communal punishment. See, for example, Kumbuka, "TANU in Songea District", pp. 7–8.

¹⁰⁶ www.peramiho.org/tz/abasia/historia/vita-ya-maji-maji.html, accessed on the 3rd September 2018.

¹⁰⁷ Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 22.

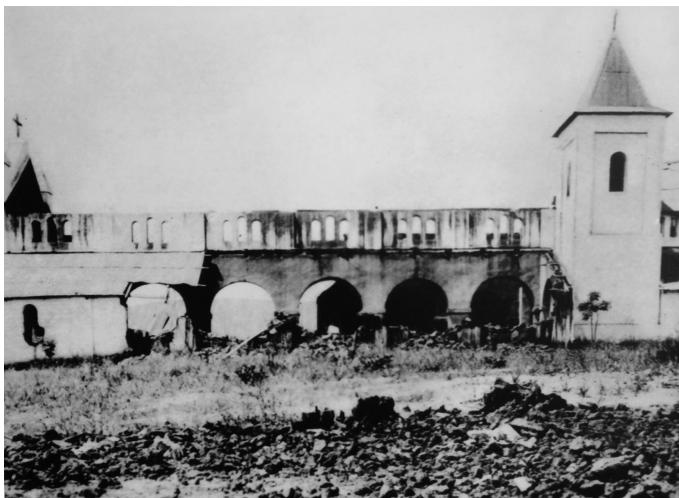


Figure 8: Peramiho church after the burning. Photo obtained from Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea.



Figure 9: Peramiho Church as it looks today. Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

refused to accept *maji* medicine, hence construed as a potential German ally.¹⁰⁸ Although in both battles the Ngoni insurgents were successful repelled, several

108 Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 24.

other attacks were attempted by both chiefs at the close of 1905 in different places. Between November 1905 and June 1906 both chiefs had resorted to defensive guerrilla warfare.¹⁰⁹

Owing to this insurgency, the German colonial authorities had to use excessive military force to end the war, and the way they did it exemplifies how “resistance in German territories resulted in massive slaughter.”¹¹⁰ Unable to confront German reinforcements, the Ngoni chiefs and sub-chiefs were captured. They were detained as war captives and executed on 27th February 1906. Unfortunately, however these events have not been fully documented by historians. Whereas Father Elzear Ebner explains the executions in six lines, O.B. Mapunda and G.P. Mpangara summarize them in a quotation from an informant they had interviewed in May 1968.¹¹¹ The following sub-section, therefore, examines at length the transgenerational narrative memories of the hangings.

Memories of the Hangings

Memories of the Maji Maji war fighters who are honoured today as heroes preoccupy the minds of most of the elders interviewed in Songea Town. There are several Maji Maji war sites in and around Songea, which these elders have preserved and continue to preserve. These sites include Majimaji Memorial Museum (which is also the graveyard of the war heroes), the hanging site (*Kinyongeoni*) and Chandamale Hill (see Figure 10a), the hiding place of Songea Mbano. Most of these sites are used by the Ngoni for ancestor worship. As a matter of fact, the Maji Maji memorial sites in Songea are historical-cum-ritual sites. According to Jean Comaroff and John Camaroff, rituals are not meaningless practices, but “signifying practices.”¹¹² Ritual, they further argue, is ‘a vital element in the processes that make and remake social facts and collective identities.¹¹³

Memories of the hangings in Songea exist as narrative and cultural memories. Cultural memories are manifested in monuments like the hanging site monument and the museum itself. The latter contains collections of photographs of those who

¹⁰⁹ Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, p. 25.

¹¹⁰ A.D. Roberts (ed), *The Colonial Moment in Africa: Essays on the Movement of Minds and Materials 1900–1940* (Great Britain: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1990), p. 16.

¹¹¹ Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni*, p. 143; Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, p. 27.

¹¹² Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, “Introduction”, in Id., *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. xvi.

¹¹³ Comaroff and Comaroff, “Introduction”, p.xvi.



Figure 10a and 10b: 10a) Chandamale Hill. 10b) The Grave of Songea Mbano. Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

were hanged. Narrative memories exist as stories of the hangings told by elders. These stories have been created through Maurice Halbwachs' process of localization.¹¹⁴

114 For the process of localization see, Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, pp. 52–53.

Halbwachs has written that if a group of people (say a family group) is interested in certain memories (or have a “community of interests and thoughts” in them) and “is able to call them to mind,” then such memories “hang together” and “resemble each other.”¹¹⁵ In Songea, for example, the elders have maintained common narratives of the hangings. Roshohora and Kurmann observe that “in the area around Songea, the execution of Ngoni leaders is the central event of Maji Maji.”¹¹⁶ As recorded in *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*, Songea was “the apex of violence” due to the extensive annihilation of local chiefs and sub-chiefs which preceded the war.¹¹⁷ In fact, hardly a knowledgeable Ngoni elder would recount the history of Maji Maji without mentioning the execution of Ngoni leaders, particularly the execution of *Nduna* Songea Mbano.¹¹⁸

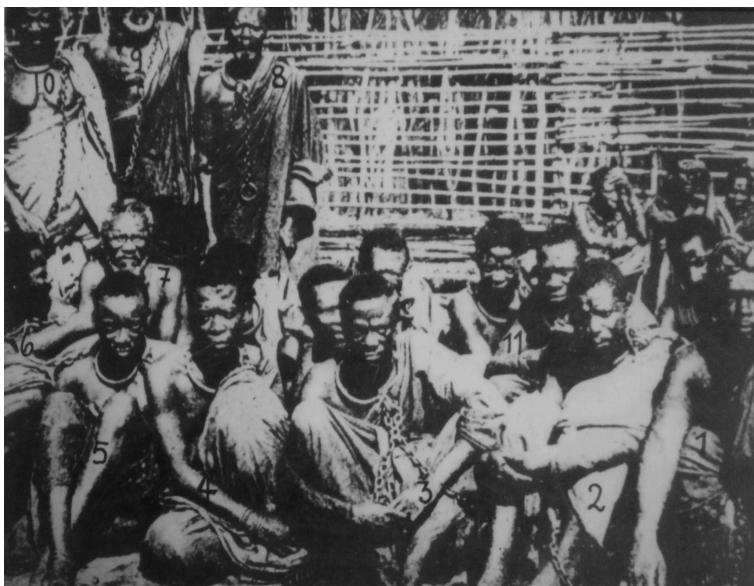


Figure 11: Chained Majimaji captives. Photo obtained from Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea. Photo: © Fr. Johannes Häfliger.

¹¹⁵ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, p. 52.

¹¹⁶ Rushohora and Kurmann, “Look at Majimaji!”, p. 94.

¹¹⁷ Schmidt, “Deadly Silence”, p. 183.

¹¹⁸ John Nditi, “Songea Walivyoweka Historia Katika Vita ya Maji Maji”, <https://habarileo.co.tz/habari/2019-02-035cae1c5da.aspx>, last accessed on 4th February 2019.

Stories of the hangings begin with the capture of Ngoni chiefs and sub-chiefs (see Figure 11 above) soon after the end of the war. As already elaborated, between September 1905 and January 1906 the whole of Ungoni experienced bitter fighting between German forces and Ngoni insurgents.¹¹⁹ By January 1906 the Germans had won the war in much of the Ungoni region except in Chabruma's territory, where the skirmishes extended to June 1906.¹²⁰ The people interviewed in this study remember how the Maji Maji fighters in Songea were captured, imprisoned, and finally hanged. The prison where they were taken was originally a wooden building which was rebuilt in 1948.¹²¹ The building which is still used for its original purpose exists together with the current police post and German Court as German colonial sites.¹²²

Memories of the Capture and Execution of Nduna Songea Mbano

The capture of Songea Mbano and his execution is the event most remembered in Songea. Unlike other prisoners of war who were executed on 27th April 1906, Mbano was hanged on a different day. Prior to his execution, his colleagues in captivity were ordered to dig a hole unaware that they were digging their own grave.¹²³ Local memories maintain that all the war captives, save Mbano, were hanged (four at a time) and their bodies were “heaped into a pit,” which is believed to be a mass grave.¹²⁴

Before his surrender and finally his capture, Mbano used Chandamale Hill, which is located some kilometres away from Songea town, as his hiding place, where he held meetings with his worriers and planned his attacks and counterattacks.¹²⁵

119 Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni*, pp. 140–143; Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, pp. 20–25.

120 Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni*, p.143.

121 The photo of the chained captives was taken by Fr. Johannes Häfliger: a Benedictine missionary who worked at Paramiho. See, for example, Rushohora and Kurmann, “Look at Majimaji”, p. 92–93; Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni*, pp. 142–143; Minogape, “A Tourist Circuit of Songea”, p. 11.

122 Minogape, “A Tourist Circuit of Songea”, p. 9; SMC, “Regional Administration and Local Government: Investment Profile”, September 2006, p. 1.

123 Interview with Mzee Yasin Yusuph Mbano, Matimila, 29th September 2017; Bantazari Nyamusya, Maji Maji Museum, 25th September 2017.

124 A handful of informants interviewed in this study share similar information. See also Mzee Mayika of Mshangao Songea as interviewed by Mapunda and Mpangara in Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, pp. 27–28.

125 Interview with Blandina Raphael, MMM, 26th September 2017; Bahati Ali Mbano, Mfaranyaki, 22nd September 2017; Mzee Ali Songea Mbano, Mfaranyaki, 29th September 2017.

The top of the hill provided an underground cave, the entrance of which was concealed by massive stones. Local memories reveal that Mbano entered the cave when forced to retreat by advancing German soldiers, which prolonged his freedom. Even when the Germans discovered Mbano's hiding place, they could not penetrate the entrance to the cave. A myth survives in Songea that Mbano's marshal skills, which were cherished locally, were rooted in his magical abilities and his vast knowledge of traditional war medicines.¹²⁶ Local people believe that Mbano's military tactics and strategies defied conventional warfare methods, thereby preventing his capture by the Germans for a long time. In addition to the *maji* medicine, Mbano relied on his own war medicine. This medicine, which was already in use in Ungoni before *maji* medicine, was believed to turn humans into ant hills.¹²⁷ With the help of this medicine, Mbano is believed to have escaped several attempts by the Germans to capture him. This collective supposition, which presents Mbano as a mythical hero, gives credence to Isurin's argument that collective memory, unlike formal history, "reduces events to mythic archetypes."¹²⁸

Narrative memories vary in the way they portray Mbano as a super-hero who escaped capture by the Germans through warfare. There is, for instance, disagreement among the people interviewed in this study about how Mbano finally fell into the hands of the Germans. Some say Mbano was captured by his pursuers,¹²⁹ while others argue that the Germans failed to capture him through warfare, but he surrendered upon learning that all his comrades had already been hanged.¹³⁰ For those who hold the latter position, they portray Mbano as a pathetic fugitive who surrendered to the Germans after all his comrades had been annihilated. A description of how Mbano surrendered to the Germans was given by Mapunda and Mpangara in the late 1960s¹³¹ and can also be seen from a recent interview with Zainabu Mangoma:

After days of solitude in his hiding place, Songea Mbano asked himself: why should I not submit to my pursuers? For it makes no difference now that all my comrades are dead. Then he came out from his hiding place, faced the Germans and announced to them: I am

¹²⁶ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017; Bahati Ali Mbano, Mfaranyika, 29th September 2017.

¹²⁷ G.C.K. Gwassa, "African Methods of Warfare During the Maji Maji War 1905–1907", in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed), *War and Society in Africa* (London: Frank Cass & Company Limited, 1972), p. 126.

¹²⁸ Isurin, *Collective Remembering*, p. 15.

¹²⁹ Interview with George Milinga, Peramiko, 25th September 2017; John Nditi, "Songea Walivyo-weka Historia Katika Vita ya Maji Maji", <https://habarileo.co.tz/habari/2019-02-035caee1c5da.aspx>, last accessed on 4th February 2019.

¹³⁰ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

¹³¹ Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", p. 27.

here, kill me! This I have decided myself; you just go ahead! He was told: we have no plans to kill you, but we want you to tell us the whereabouts of your colleagues. Mbano retorted: No, I know nothing. By the way, you have already killed all of them.¹³²

Similar stories of how Mbano presented himself to the Germans are narrated by different people interviewed in this study. It should be noted however that, although the narrative memories described above attest to the fact that Mbano surrendered to the Germans, the fact remains that Mbano has not lost his position of being a hero. Those interviewed in this study would argue that Mbano chose death rather than accept German rule, and for this reason he is a hero.

The conflicting memories regarding Mbano's capture do not however feature in the collective memories of his hanging. Memories of the execution portray Mbano as an exclusively heroic and patriotic figure, who adamantly refused to collaborate with the Germans at the risk of his life.¹³³ Mbano was detained for three days while the Germans tried to convince him to co-operate, but to no avail. The Germans finally decided to hang him after their efforts to convince him proved futile. He was brought out for hanging and his people were invited to witness the event. He was prepared for hanging but miraculously the rope fell away from him. His persecutors pleaded with him to choose life and befriend them. Mbano refused again. He was hanged for the second time but the rope failed to support his weight and he fell down still alive.¹³⁴ He was hanged for the third time and once again survived. The Germans finished him off by shooting him. His body was buried in a separate grave next to the mass grave. After seven days, the Germans sent out prisoners who dug up Mbano's body and cut off his head.

Yasin Yusuph Mbano describes the conversation held between Mbano and the Germans when the first attempt to hang him failed:

Still wondering why Mbano fails to die, the Germans asked him politely: "Dear Mr. Mbano we sincerely want to save your life; we don't want to execute you anymore." Mbano replied: "Why shouldn't you? I must die. You have killed my chief (referring to chief Mputa who was the first person to be hanged). You have killed all my colleagues. Whom should I keep

132 Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

133 Information about Mbano's hanging as provided in this paragraph was collected from different informants: Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017; *Mzee* Mstafa Abdala (Kifimbo), Namanyigu village, 27th September 2017; Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017; Erick Sokko, Maji Maji Museum, 26th September 2017; Bahati Ali Mbano, Mfaranyaki, 29th September 2017; *Mzee* Ali Songea Mbano, Mfaranyaki, 29th September 2017 and *Mzee* Yasin Yusuph Mbano, Matimila Village, 29th September 2017.

134 This did not happen to Songea Mbano alone. Similar incidences were reported of other people who failed to die by hanging. Seen in Mapunda and Mpangara, "The Maji Maji War in Ungoni", pp. 27–28.

company with? You must kill me, but I must first ask your favour not to kill my young son, Ali Mbano." He then warned them that they should kill him lest he starved himself. The Germans decided to kill him but they honoured his plea not to kill his young son.¹³⁵

It is apparent therefore that the narrative memories describe Mbano as having an exceptionally heroic personality, which is revealed in the way local people talk about the nature of his death, his exceptional marshal skills and his burial, that is, he was hanged on a different day and buried in a grave of his own, and, unlike his colleagues, he was decapitated. The fact that Mbano survived three hanging attempts makes him the most remembered and revered Ngoni hero. His heroic status is elevated above the other Ngoni chiefs and sub-chiefs who were hanged before him. It is no wonder that portraits of Mbano and photos taken



Figure 12: Photo of Songea Mbano. Photo obtained from Maji Maji Memorial Museum in Songea.

¹³⁵ Interview with *Mzee* Yusuph Mbano, Matimila Village, 22nd September 2017. See also John Nditi, "Songea Walivyoweka Historia Katika Vita ya Maji Maji", <https://habarileo.co.tz/habari/2019-02-035caee1c5da.aspx>, last accessed on 4th February 2019.

before his death corroborate the fact that he was a distinguished hero, which survives in people's memories to date.¹³⁶ His photos taken by the colonialists to be found in museums and history books (see Figure 12 above) have been modified to give a heroic impression of his personality.¹³⁷ In fact, Rushohora and Kurmann are right in arguing that "Songea Mbano's portrait is an example of how Tanzanians appropriated photographs taken in the colonial period were redefined and used to narrate the history of Africa."¹³⁸ Figures 13 and 14 below show the busts of Songea Mbano and Mputa Gama respectively.



Figure 13: The bust of Songea Mbano at the Majimaji Memorial Museum. Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

¹³⁶ Rushohora and Kurmann, "Look at Majimaji!" pp. 94–97.

¹³⁷ Rushohora and Kurmann, "Look at Majimaji!", pp. 96–97.

¹³⁸ Rushohora and Kurmann, "Look at Majimaji!", p. 97.



Figure 14: The bust of Chief Mputa Gama at the Majimaji Memorial. Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

Underground Commemoration of War Heroes in Colonial Ungoni

Commemoration by way of venerating the Maji Maji heroic spirit in Songea started before independence. However, after the end of the Maji Maji war and the outbreak of the First World War the Ngoni did not have the courage to commemorate or venerate their war heroes for fear of the Germans. It was not until the end of German rule in 1919 that the descendants of the Maji Maji war heroes started visiting the sites for commemorative and ritual practices to honour the war dead.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, these activates were not as publicly or officially organized as they are today. A few elders in Songea remember how the war graves were secretly preserved by local people during the colonial period for fear of the colonial authorities. They also remember the clandestine rituals of commemoration practised by their ancestors on the graves of the war heroes – a typical example of ancestral veneration or spirit

¹³⁹ Interview with Mzee Mstafa Abdala, Namanyigu village, 27th September 2017.

veneration.¹⁴⁰ Like many other ethnic groups in Africa, the Ngoni honour and respect the spirits of their departed relations. The war dead are honoured and venerated as heroic spirits. Their graves have been preserved and turned into shrines, where they are used as prayer sites, places where the living communicate with the dead.¹⁴¹

In Africa, therefore, “ancestor worship is very important not only among tribes but also within nations.”¹⁴² This kind of worship was not uncommon in Ungoni. During the colonial period, the burial sites of the Maji Maji heroes were secretly visited by the Ngoni who offered their prayers and paid respects to their fallen ancestors.¹⁴³ However, the Ngoni could not care for the sites properly for fear of the colonial authorities and so the sites were somewhat abandoned.¹⁴⁴ Mstafa Abdala revealed: “people used to point to the abandoned graves and say, that is where Songea Mbano is buried.”¹⁴⁵ Simoni Daniel Gama, a descendant of *Nkosi Mputa*, recalls:

We used to visit the graves and practise our rituals there, but we did it secretly. One would go there pretending to be a passer-by, and on reaching the graves (whose markings were known to us), he or she prayed to the spirits of the dead depending on his or her faith. Then, he or she would leave unnoticed.¹⁴⁶

The above information testifies to the fact that secrecy dominated commemorative events during the colonial period. In addition, evidence shows that the elders held secret meetings to discuss issues pertaining to the commemoration or veneration of their heroic spirits.¹⁴⁷ Thus, “ancestor veneration was conducted without the knowledge of the colonial masters.”¹⁴⁸ George Milinga recalls: “after the war and

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Simon Daniel Gama, Maposeni, 28th September 2017. Ancestor veneration is a topic thoroughly examined by Nelson, *Social Memory as Ritual Practice*, p. 450 and David M. Gordon, “History of the Luapala Retold: Landscape, Memory and Identity in the Kazembe Kingdom”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 47, No. 1, (2006), pp. 21–42.

¹⁴¹ Kazimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial”, p. 20; Interview with George Milinga, Peramiho, 25th September 2017.

¹⁴² Ali A. Mazrui, *On Heroes and Uhuru Worship: Essays on Independent Africa* (London: Longmans, 1967), p. 21.

¹⁴³ Interview with Mzee Mstafa Abdala, Namanyigu village, 27th September 2017; Interview with George Milinga, Peramiho, 25th September 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Mzee Mstafa Abdala, Namanyigu village, 27th September 2017.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Simon Daniel Gama, Maposeni, 28th September 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Simon Daniel Gama, Maposeni, 28th September 2017; Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Kazimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial”, p. 17.

subsequent hangings of the captives, the Ngoni developed an indescribable fear of the German colonial government and would shiver on mentioning their name.”¹⁴⁹

Generally, the Ngoni were emotionally and spiritually attached to the graves of their ancestors (particularly the chiefs) because they believed in the dead spirits. Pre-colonial religious history of the Ngoni was built on worshiping ancestor spirits, the so-called *mahoka* or *chapanga*.¹⁵⁰ It was common for the Ngoni to pray to the spirits of the dead chiefs to save the community from serious dangers such as famine and diseases.¹⁵¹ As a matter of fact, the Ngoni not only respected the dead souls, but also feared them.¹⁵² This inherent cultural trait of the Ngoni pushed them to secretly venerate their ancestors who had been hanged by the Germans. According to Margaret Read, Ngoni youth are historically known for their passion for heroism. War heroes were greatly esteemed by the community, and so when war broke out youths would fight hard to become war heroes.¹⁵³ “In the Ngoni community”, Read adds, “there was no place for a coward or shirker.”¹⁵⁴

The Construction of Majimaji Memorial Museum

Father Martin Chengula, originally a Ngoni from Peramiho Mission, is locally remembered for his contribution to the establishment of the Majimaji museum. He collected important photos and records of the hangings and encouraged the Ngoni elders to pursue their goal of establishing a regional shrine to honour their fallen ancestors.¹⁵⁵ The Ngoni elders established the so-called Elders’ Committee whose intention was to speed up the process of constructing a regional war memorial. The committee asked the then Regional Commissioner of Ruvuma Region, Mr. Martin Haule, to support its commitment to establishing a war memorial, which he agreed to do. Mr. Haule’s

¹⁴⁹ Interview with George Milinga, Peramiho, 25th September 2017.

¹⁵⁰ C.B. Nyandindi, “Missionary Impact on Development in Songea District”, Unpublished Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 1973, p. 8; Mapunda and Mpangara, “The Maji Maji War in Ungoni”, p. 9.

¹⁵¹ Interview with George Milinga, Peramiho, 25th September 2017; Margaret Read, “The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their Former Military State”, *Africa: Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. xi, No. 1, (1938), p. 6.

¹⁵² Read, “The Moral Code”, p. 5.

¹⁵³ Read, “The Moral Code”, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ Read, “The Moral Code”, p. 4; The Ngoni people are generally known for their martial skills and are often referred to as the ‘martial Ngoni.’ See, for example, Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order* (USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 30.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

first action was to identify the location of the mass grave, which was known to only a few people at that time.¹⁵⁶ He achieved this with the help of Mr. Jumbe Darajani, the surviving witness of the hangings and burials, who could give the precise position of the mass grave.¹⁵⁷ Identifying Songea Mbano's grave was not difficult, because the burial site was marked by a local tree (known as *chingunguti/dichcros-tachys cinerea*), which is relatively small and known for its unusual hardness and slow growth.¹⁵⁸ To be sure of the location of the graves, Mr. Haule ordered the site to be excavated for proof of human remains, the outcome of which was positive.¹⁵⁹

The 'discovered' mass grave caught the attention of local people, who wanted the site to be preserved and protected for their progeny.¹⁶⁰ The regional government under Mr. Haule immediately expressed its intention of developing the site to become a protected area of historical importance. However, this idea could not be implemented immediately as Mr. Haule left Songea for another region in 1964.¹⁶¹ Although by 1965 construction at the site had started, it was not until 1979 when Dr. Lawrence Gama became the new Regional Commissioner of Ruvuma that serious efforts were made to develop the site.¹⁶² As one of the members of the bereaved families of the hanged heroes, Gama realized the urgency of developing Maji Maji memory sites which had lacked proper supervision and preservation.¹⁶³ He offered to support the project by collaborating with Father Chengula and the elders in

156 Interview with Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017.

157 Interview with Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017; Erick Sokko, Maji Maji Museum, 26th September, 2017; Interview with Mzee Yasin Yusuph Mbano, Matimila, 29th September 2017. According to Yasin Yusuph Mbano, *Mzee* Darajani supervised located the grave of Songea Mbano when a decision was made by the Regional Commissioner to open it in the 1960s.

158 Interview with Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017; Yasin Yusuph Mbano, Matimila, 29th September 2017. The tree stands next to Songea Mbano's grave and is widely known locally. The local people consider it to be a sacred marking of Songea Mbano's grave.

159 SMC, "The History of Maji Maji Museum".

160 Interview with Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

161 SMC, "The History of Maji Maji Museum".

162 Flower Manase Msuya, "Resistance, Freedom, Nation-Building: Reminiscences of the German Colonial Past in Tanzania Past, in Deutsches Historisches Museum, *German Colonialism: Fragments Past and Present* (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum 2017), p. 72; SMC, "The History of Maji Maji Museum".

163 Interview with Mzee Yasin Yusuph Mbano, Matimila Village, 29th September 2017. Gama became the Regional Commissioner of Songea when parliament was debating on the National Museum Bill of 1979. During the 1970s, the government, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, encouraged government officials to establish museums at village, district and regional level. This explains part of the reason why Gama up embarked on Maji Maji Memorial project for his region. See, for example "Majadiliano ya Bunge (Hansard), 17th Meeting 2nd–4th January 1980", pp. 123–129. See also, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): "Official Report (Tenth Meeting), The Antiquities Bill of 1964, 18th–21st February 1964 (Second Reading)", pp. 85–112.

reconstructing the war graves, which at that time were simply burial mounds.¹⁶⁴ The mass grave where the two Ngoni chiefs (Mputa Gama and Tamatama) were buried together with other Maji Maji fighters was reconstructed alongside Songea Mbano's grave. To make the two graves look somewhat modern, they were walled in using burnt bricks and cement and the names of the people buried there written on them. The museum buildings and statues of the war heroes were erected. By the early 1980s, the construction of the Majimaji museum had been completed. The museum was officially inaugurated on 6th July 1980 by Nyerere.¹⁶⁵ Figure 15 below shows a tower erected on top of the mass grave at Majimaji Museum.



Figure 15: The Mass Grave at Majimaji Memorial Museum with 66 names of those buried there. Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

The construction of the memorial went hand-in-hand with the construction of new sites honouring war heroes.¹⁶⁶ One of these was Maji Maji Stadium. Its

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Erick Sokko, Maji Maji War Memorial, 26th September 2017.

¹⁶⁵ Kazimoto, "Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial", p. 2 and 20; Interview with Mzee Tarimo, 28th September 2017; Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

¹⁶⁶ Gama is today honoured for his efforts to promote football game in Songea and beyond. He was the brain behind the successes of the Maji Maji Football Club in the 1980s. His idea of using

construction started on 1st July 1977 and was officially opened on 11th October 1978 by Nyerere. The stadium, together with the Maji Maji Football team, was meant to popularize memories of the Maji Maji war in Songea and beyond.¹⁶⁷ The platforms of the stadium were named after the Ngoni war heroes.¹⁶⁸ Several other places and public institutions were named after Maji Maji or its war heroes. There were Maji Maji Street (Songea), Maji Maji Hall (Songea), Maji Maji Village (Tunduru), Maji Maji Prison (Tunduru), Maji Maji Primary School (Songea), Mkomaniile Primary School (Namtumbo) and Chabruma Secondary School (Songea).¹⁶⁹ Archival evidence suggests that these names were proposed by special committees appointed for that purpose.¹⁷⁰

It should be borne in mind that the construction of the Maji Maji War Memorial, including the Maji Maji stadium (see Figure 16 below), was supervised by Gama himself. As the Regional Commissioner (1977–1989) Gama authorized the collection of contributions from local people in all the districts of Ruvuma region. People who registered with the local co-operative unions agreed that some of their money could be deducted from their payments for the memorial project.¹⁷¹ Although the project was heavily funded by the regional government, much of the labour was freely provided by local people.¹⁷² For instance, they participated in making bricks and constructing traditional Ngoni huts, which were meant to strengthen the ethnographic concept of the Majimaji museum.¹⁷³ Mustafa Abdala, the chairperson of traditional healers of Songea, proudly remarked: “we built the Ngoni traditional huts ourselves and I

football to honour colonial war heroes did not end with his tenure as the Regional Commissioner for Ruvuma region. While serving in this capacity in Tabora (1989–1994) he established Milambo football club (to honour chief Mirambo) and constructed the Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium. See, for example, “TFF Ivalie Njuga Ubora wa Viwanja”, <https://www.mwanaspot.co.tz/kolamn/1799642-5giemsz/index.html>, last accessed on 4th February 2019; majira-hall.blogspot.com/2012/07/wadau-wuanja-wa-majimaji-unatia.html, last accessed on 4th February 2019; stephanomango.blogspot.com/2011_01_17_archive.html, last accessed on 4th February 2019.

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, Paul Msemwa, Fabian Lyimo, Emanuel Lucas and Balthazar Nyamusya, “Kumbukumbu ya Miaka 100 ya Vita vya Maji Maji”, Makumbusho ya Nyumba ya Utamaduni, Dar es Salaam, November 2005, p. 1; Interview with Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Erick Sokko, MMM, 26 September 2017.

¹⁶⁹ See Kazimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial”, p. 4; Interview with Blandina Raphael, MMM, 26th September 2017. Note that some information provided here is based on field observation.

¹⁷⁰ National Record Centre, (hereafter NRC), No. PK/UA/59/18, “Songea Mikutano”, 17th August 1982, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Blandina Raphael, MMM, 26th September 2017.

¹⁷² Kazimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial”, p. 18.

¹⁷³ Kizimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Memorial”, p.18; Interview with Mzee Mstafa Abdala, Namanyigu village, 27th September 2017.



Figure 16: The Maji Maji Stadium in Songea. Photographed by author, 25th April 2017.

supervised the exercise as chairperson. The regional government invited us to do the job after the huts they had constructed collapsed.”¹⁷⁴ These were two grass-thatched, wattle and daub huts exemplifying a typical Ngoni house. The ethnological hall houses numerous photos and cultural objects, which were collected in and around Songea from individuals who offered them for free.

Supervision of the museum remained under the regional government (the Department of Culture) until 1st September 2005 when it was handed over to the Songea Municipal Authority.¹⁷⁵ This happened after it was realized that the memorial was in a bad state regarding its preservation and management due to lack of funds.¹⁷⁶ As a result, the regional government, in collaboration with the Municipal Council, started looking for funds from different sources to rescue the museum from its financial woes.¹⁷⁷ The Municipal Council negotiated successfully with the higher government

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Mzee Mstafa Abdala, Namanyigu village, 27th September 2017.

¹⁷⁵ SMC, “The History of Maji Maji Museum,”; Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017. In 2005, the museums of Singida and Ruvuma were independent regional museums with no direct link to the National Museum of Tanzania. See, for example, Norbert A. Kayombo, “Management of Movable Heritage in Tanzania”, in Bertram B.B. Mapunda and Paul Msemwa (eds), *Salvaging Tanzania’s Cultural Heritage* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 2005), p. 273.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017; Tarimo, 28th September 2017; Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September, 2017. According to Kazimoto, the Department of Culture which received funds from the government to run the museum was abolished in 1977. See, for example, Kazimoto, “Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial”, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Tarimo, MMM, 28th September 2017.

authorities for the museum to be placed under the National Museum of Tanzania.¹⁷⁸ The result was that the museum was declared a national war museum by President Kikwete on 27th February 2006.¹⁷⁹ On 8th December 2009, the museum was registered under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) and on 27th February 2010 it was officially transferred from the regional government of Songea to the MNRT.¹⁸⁰ The museum was thenceforth run by the National Museum of Tanzania under the MNRT.¹⁸¹

Post-independence Commemorations of War heroes, 1960s to the Present

Secret commemoration and veneration of the war dead continued after the end of colonial rule in 1961. Acts of commemorations were no longer performed individually or secretly as in colonial times, but were openly and collectively organized by the Ngoni elders in collaboration with the regional government.¹⁸² Traditional ceremonies to commemorate the war heroes and heroines were organized by a voluntary committee of elders.¹⁸³ Among those who formed this committee were Daniel Gama, Shaibu Mkeso, Teacher Duwe, Alana Mbawa, Agatha Shawa, Ali Songea Mbano, Daudi Mbano, Xavery Zulu and Father Chengula.¹⁸⁴

The annual commemoration of Maji Maji started in Songea in 1980 and continues to date.¹⁸⁵ It takes place on February 27th, involving modern commemorations by government officials and traditional commemorations by Ngoni elders. This is supervised by the regional government in collaboration with Songea

178 Interview with Tarimo, 28th September 2017; Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

179 SMC, “The History of Maji Maji Museum”; Msemwa, “Kumbukumbu ya Miaka 100”, p. 2. The commemorative events to mark 100 years of the Maji Maji War started in July 2005 and were finalized in February 2006.

180 Albano Midelo, “Rashidi Kawawa ni Mcheza Filamu wa Kwanza Tanzania,” <http://www.unapitwa.com>, last accessed on 26th April 2017; Interview with Erick Sokko, MMM, 26th September 2017.

181 Msuya, “Resistance, Freedom, Nation-Building”, p. 72.

182 Individuals continued to visit the site for their private prayers.

183 <http://www.matukiodaima.co.tz/2013/04/>, last accessed on 26th April 2017; SMC, “The History of Maji Maji Museum”.

184 SMC, “The History of Maji Maji Museum”.

185 Albano Midelo, “Rashidi Kawawa ni Mcheza Filamu wa Kwanza Tanzania,” <http://www.unapitwa.com>, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

Elders' Council (SEC).¹⁸⁶ SEC or *Baraza la Wazee la Mila na Desturi* was a traditional institution which supervised the day-to-day activities of the museum on behalf of the regional government until 2005. The members of the council were basically the custodians of Ngoni customs and traditions. The Songea Club building (see Figure 17b below) served as the SEC's headquarters until it was relocated in Maji-maji museum.¹⁸⁷ SEC was incorporated in the museum as a traditional institution responsible for promoting and preserving Ngoni customs and traditions. The reason for this was most members of SEC were related by blood to the Maji Maji heroes who are buried at the museum.¹⁸⁸ The bereaved families actually owned the war graves, the right of which could not be violated by the government which took over the site.

As stakeholders of the museum, therefore, the elders of the council performed some duties as required of them by the SEC constitution which is shown in Figure 17a below.¹⁸⁹ For example, they were required to gather historical information on the Ngoni community and share it with people who visited the museum for research purposes.¹⁹⁰ In addition, they were required to critically review new publications on Maji Maji and give advice to the authors when necessary.¹⁹¹ More importantly, the elders were supposed to give advice on the best way the war graves and other historical sites in the region could be protected and preserved for posterity.¹⁹² Last, but not least, the elders were expected to solicit funds from different sources on behalf of the museum.¹⁹³

Prior to 2006, traditional commemorations of war heroes had embraced specific features, which have remained intact to date. The main acts of commemoration were a procession, singing Ngoni song (known as *ligiu*), offering prayers to the dead spirits of the war heroes, narrating the history of the Maji Maji war, and eating and drinking traditional food and drink.¹⁹⁴ Collections of traditional weapons are also

¹⁸⁶ SMC, "The History of Maji Maji Museum"; Albano Midelo, "Makumbusho ya Taifa Kutoa Tuzo ya Heshima ya Utamaduni na Sanaa kwa Hayati Rashidi Kawawa", <http://www.fikrapewu.com>, last accessed on 12th April 2016.

¹⁸⁷ SMC, "The History of Maji Maji Museum"; Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Blandina Raphael, MMM, 26th September 2017.

¹⁸⁹ The constitution was prepared by Father Chengula in collaboration with the Ngoni elders. With it, Songea Elders' Council was founded. See, for example, Kazimoto, "Managerial Problems Facing Maji Maji Memorial", p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ SMC, "The History of Maji Maji Museum".

¹⁹¹ SMC, "Katiba ya Baraza la Makumbusho ya Maji Maji, Mila na Desturi" (hereafter Elders' Constitution), Peramiko Printing Press, (no date and page provided).

¹⁹² SMC, "Katiba ya Baraza la Makumbusho".

¹⁹³ SMC, "Katiba ya Baraza la Makumbusho"; SMC, "The History of the Maji Maji Museum".

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

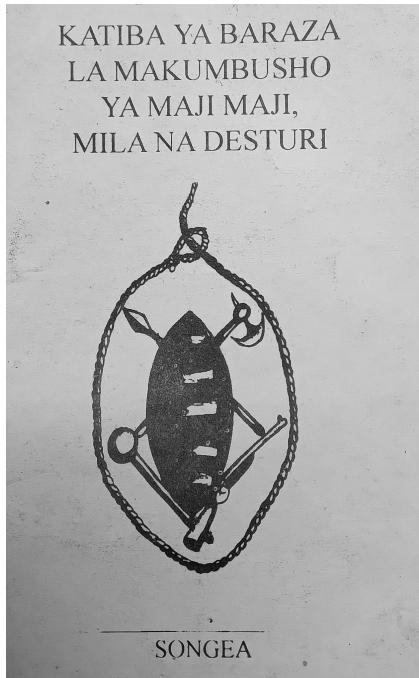


Figure 17a and 17b: 17a) The front page of the Constitution of Majimaji Memorial Museum Council prepared by Ngoni elders. Note the symbol showing a hanging rope, a shield and traditional weapons. Source: By courtesy of Dr. Tarimo. 17b) Songea club building with a watch tower. Photograph by author, 25th April 2017.

displayed. Commemorations like these are what scholars of memory history call celebratory and commemorative rituals.¹⁹⁵

The above commemorations were financed by the regional government and SEC. During annual commemoration of Maji Maji, other councils from the rest of the districts of Ruvuma Region (Mbinga, Nyasa, Namtumbo, Tunduru and Songea Rural) were, for the most part, invited to showcase Maji Maji memorabilia existing in their area of origin.¹⁹⁶

Modern commemorations which started in 2005 did not interfere with the pre-existing traditional ways of commemorating war heroes, but were superimposed on them. Modern commemorations added some national symbolic acts of commemoration to the pre-existing Ngoni acts of commemoration. They included a military parade to be held at the memorial ground as well as the laying of traditional weapons on the graves of the war heroes or on their monuments by the guests of honour, mostly top government leaders. Another symbolic event that was incorporated was a session of prayers to be said by both Muslim and Christian leaders at the graves. It should be remembered that modern commemoration of war heroes in Tanzania started long ago with the so-called Hero's Day. These symbolic acts of commemoration, which sought to harmonize commemorations of war heroes in the country, had been performed during Hero's Day since independence. Between 1961 and 1999, for example, Mnazi Mmoja (in Dar es Salaam) was the only place where the events to commemorate war heroes took place.¹⁹⁷ Whereas Heroes Day honoured all war heroes, such as those who fell in the nineteenth century, during African resistance movements as well as during two World Wars and the Kagera Wars, those who died fighting against colonial imposition in Songea are specifically honoured as Maji Maji war heroes. According to Ali A. Mazrui, "recognizing the heroes as common heroes" is the process for achieving what he calls "national self-identification."¹⁹⁸ The national acts of commemoration as practiced in Songea strengthen Kirk A. Denton's argument that "sites of memory 'deritualize' local and

¹⁹⁵ Discussion on national rituals and performances can be found in Eric Taylor Woods and Rachel Tsang, "Ritual and Performance in the Study of Nations and Nationalism", in Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1–11; Anthony D. Smith, "Elites, Masses and the Re-enactment of the National Past", in Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 21–24.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 22nd September 2017; Tarimo, 28th September 2017.

¹⁹⁷ Anonymous Reporter, "Maadhimisho ya Mashujaa Yafanyika Kabaga, Kagera", *Mtanzania*, No. 1182, 26th July 1999, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ Mazrui, *On Heroes and Uhuru Worship*, p. 21.

traditional forms of memory and impose on them a collective national memory.”¹⁹⁹ This in turn leads to “new forms of state memorialism.”²⁰⁰

The common practice in Songea is that commemoration of the Maji Maji war heroes begins on 25th January and reaches its climax on 27th February. The first day is arrival day when preparations are made for the commemoration. On the second day the invited elders from different places hold a wake at the museum, when they slaughter a cow and two goats as part of their commemorative ritual and ceremony.²⁰¹ These elders usually arrive in their special clothes that are worn at commemorations.²⁰² The third day is when modern commemorations are merged with traditional commemorations and several activities are performed. The elders, invited government officials, army officers, students and the rest of people attending the event meet first at the Regional Commissioner’s Office before they gather at the nearby hanging site where prayers are said in memory of war heroes.²⁰³ Traditional weapons, such as a bow, an arrow, an axe (*chinjenje*), a war shield (*chikopa*) and a club (*chibonga*) – typical Ngoni weapons used during a war – are placed at the hanging monument which is a tower.²⁰⁴ At the bottom of this tower is a list of the names of the people who were hanged there. The longest commemorative event was held during the centenary commemoration of Maji Maji from February 2005 to July 2005, and it is widely mentioned in literature.²⁰⁵

Once all these activities are done, the procession starts moving towards the museum while the Ngoni war song (*ligiu*) is sung.²⁰⁶ According to Zainabu Mangoma (see her photo in Figure 18), the *ligiu* song is different from a war drum in that the former involves the use of Ngoni weapons (those used in Maji Maji) as sound-making instruments and it is accompanied by actual singing of the people,²⁰⁷ while the latter

¹⁹⁹ Denton, *Exhibiting the Past*, p. 11.

²⁰⁰ See, for example, Alessandro Triulzi, “The Past as Contested Terrain: Commemorating New Sites of Memory in War-torn Ethiopia”, in Preben Kaarholm (ed), *Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), p. 125.

²⁰¹ Interview with Blandina Raphael, MMM, 26th September 2017; Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017.

²⁰² Interview with Blandina Raphael, MMM, 26th September 2017.

²⁰³ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017; stephanomango.blogspot.com/2011_01_17_archive.html, last accessed on 4th February 2019.

²⁰⁵ See, for example, Fuhrmann, *Screening the German Colonies*, p. 4; Bendex, *Global Development and Colonial Power*, p. 21.

²⁰⁶ Minogape, “A Tourist Circuit of Songea”, p. 13; Interview with Bantazari Nyamyusya, MMM, 25th September 2017; Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017. The *ligiu* song was hitherto sung in Songea Club building, including all commemorative ceremonies.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

does not involve singing. On reaching the museum, prayers are said at the graves, the army officers' parade and the invited guests of honour pay their respects to the war heroes by laying traditional weapons on their graves.²⁰⁸ The history of Maji Maji is then narrated by a person who is chosen for that purpose. The actual celebration comes at the end and involves eating and drinking and singing the *ligiu* song. Traditional Ngoni food like millet cake and local brew, *muyakala*, are made available at the museum for people attending the events.²⁰⁹



Figure 18: Zainabu Mangoma in her special bark cloth she wore for commemoration event in Songea. Photo by courtesy of Zainabu Mangoma.

This section has described the Maji Maji memorial sites in Songea, indicating how they influenced both individual and collective commemoration of the war dead.²¹⁰ The section has shown that commemorative events are nothing other than “collective memories [which] are both reflected and reinforced through specific cultural and temporal activities and behaviour, such as rituals, commemorative ceremonies

²⁰⁸ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017.

²¹⁰ This argument is also supported by James Giblin as cited by Joubert, “History by Word of Mouth”, pp. 44–45.

and bodily practices.”²¹¹ The history of commemoration of Maji Maji as articulated above suggests that events involving commemoration and veneration of the war dead in Songea have changed over time. The section has traced the origin of commemorative events in Songea and has shown the protracted process of constructing the war museum.

The Agonies of the Bereaved Families: From Where they Stand

One of the outcomes of organized colonial violence is that the victims of Maji Maji have passed on their traumatic memories to their descendants, while in Namibia, restitution has been made to the Nama and Herero on account of the genocide.²¹² On the one hand, the descendants of the Maji Maji heroes and heroines in Songea are satisfied that their government has recognized and honoured their fallen ancestors by constructing the Majimaji museum and by organizing annual commemorations of war heroes. On the other hand, they grieve that the skull of their great warrior, Songea Mbano, has not been given back to them for its proper traditional burial, nor have the descendants of those who were executed been compensated. Therefore, there is mounting pressure on the authorities to return the skull and compensate the victims’ descendants.

Interviews conducted in Songea indicate that Songea Mbano’s missing skull predominates. Local memories indicate that the issue of the skull is more important than compensation.²¹³ However, in recent years, both have caught the attention of parliament and the media. The Ngoni elders have continued to use the Maji Maji annual commemoration to air their views regarding the missing skull. Records indicate that demands for restitution of the skull became vocal in 2007. During the commemoration of Maji Maji on 27th February 2007, the Ngoni elders gave a joint statement asking the German government to consider giving back the skull and compensating the bereaved families.²¹⁴ They asked the then Regional Commissioner of Ruvuma to see to it that the missing skull was given back to them for a proper

²¹¹ Kate Davian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, “Introduction”, in *Memory and History in Twentieth-century Australia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 2.

²¹² Zimmerer, “Kolonialismus und kollektive Identität”, pp. 17–20; Rein Kößler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past*, (Namibia: University of Namibia Press, 2015), pp. 247–329; Bendex, *Global Development and Colonial Power*, p. 21.

²¹³ Interview with Zainabu Mangoma, Matogoro Shuleni, 27th September 2017; Tarimo, 28th September 2017;

²¹⁴ “Wangoni Wataka Wajerumani Warudishe Fuvu la Chifu Wao”, *Nipashe* No.043364, Friday 2nd March 2007, p. 9.

traditional burial.²¹⁵ In a statement quoted by *Nipashe*, a well-known local newspaper, the Ngoni elders remarked: “we want Germany to pay compensation to the families of the 64 people who were hanged and buried in a mass grave for fighting in the Maji Maji war.”²¹⁶

The question of compensation was raised in parliament in 2015 and 2017. In 2015, the Minister of Defence remarked that demands for compensation should also consider the fact that the government has continued to honour all the people who lost their lives fighting for their country.²¹⁷ He stressed that the best way to do that is to construct national war memorials in memory of the war dead.²¹⁸ In 2017, the Member of Parliament, Vedasto Ngombale, raised the question of compensation in parliament.²¹⁹ In response, the Minister of Defence said: “we are taking up this matter, and we are going to officially write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and liaise with them to take the complaint to the relevant parties.”²²⁰ He also assured parliament that the government was going “to file an official complaint to Germany seeking an apology for the atrocities the colonial power committed during the Maji Maji war.”²²¹ In a dialogue between the minister and the *Deutsch Welle* following this parliamentary debate, the former clearly stated that plans were underway to demand compensation for the victims of the Maji Maji war from Germany.²²² He classified those who deserved compensation as victims of the war who had survived and the members of bereaved families.²²³ To justify the government’s decision, the Minister cited the example of Kenya, which had done the same thing in the case of the Mau Mau war, and Namibia, which was doing it also.²²⁴

215 *Nipashe* No.043364, Friday 2nd March 2007, p. 9.

216 *Nipashe* No.043364, Friday 2nd March 2007, p. 9.

217 URT, Parliament of Tanzania, Supplementary questions, http://www.parliament.go.tz/index.php/supplementary_question/127, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

218 http://www.parliament.go.tz/index.php/supplementary_question/127, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

219 Athumanzi Mtulya, “Maji Maji War in the Spotlight”, <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Maji-Maji-War-in-the-spotlight/1840340-3805982-format-xhtml-n0enl5/index.html>, last visited on 5th February 2023.

220 <https://www.citizen.co.tz/news/maji-maji-war-in-the-spotlight/18403440-3805982>, last accessed on 8th December 2017.

221 <https://www.citizen.co.tz/news/maji-maji-war-in-the-spotlight/18403440-3805982>, last accessed on 8th December 2017.

222 “Tanzania Kuidai Ujerumani Fidia kwa Ukatili Ulioufanya Wakati wa Ukoloni”, posted in February 2017, <http://swahilitimes.com>, last accessed on 8th December 2017.

223 <http://swahilitimes.com>, last accessed on 8th December 2017.

224 <http://swahilitimes.com>, last accessed on 8th December 2017.

It goes without saying that individual government officials, particularly members of parliament and ministers, were at the forefront in supporting compensation. A similar situation can be seen in the restitution saga. During the annual commemoration of Maji Maji held in Songea on 27th February 2017, the member of parliament (special seat), Jackline Msongozi, pleaded with the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism to ensure that Mbano's skull was returned to the Ngoni people.²²⁵ This clearly demonstrates that between 2007 and 2017 the government came under mounting pressure to take action regarding reparation and restitution.

In 2017, the parliamentary debate on the question of compensation provoked mixed feelings among the public. In his online article of May 2017, for instance, Markus Mpangala phrased his title-cum-question thus: *Ni Sahihi Tanzania Kudai Fidia ya Ukoloni wa Ujerumani?* loosely translated: Is it right for Tanzania to demand compensation for German colonialism?²²⁶ He argued that there was nothing wrong with reparation, but he questioned whether material compensation alone could erase the traumatic memories of the Maji Maji war and the irreplacable loss of life it caused.

It is important to note that the issues of reparation and restitution as far as Maji Maji is concerned have, in recent years, begun to find space in scholarship.²²⁷ Balla F.Y.P. Masele in his article titled *The Unfought Maji Maji War* has metaphorically spoken about the question of compensation.²²⁸ Similarly, a journal article by Khoti Chilomba Kamanga analyzed Maji Maji from a legal perspective, showing very clearly how the war was an organized crime and a total violation of international law existing at the time of the war.²²⁹ To support the view that Maji Maji was a war crime, Kamanga provides evidence that deliberate action taken by the German colonial army violated the 1856 Lieber Code, the 1864 Geneva Convention on Land Warfare, the 1874 Brussels Final Protocol, the 1880 Oxford Manual and the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions.²³⁰ He also mentions the illegal actions taken by

²²⁵ Muhidini Amri, "Mbunge Ataka Kichwa Kirudishwe", *Habarileo*, <http://www.co.tz/index.php/habari-za-kitaifa/21048-mbunge>, last accessed on 26th April 2017.

²²⁶ Markus Mpangala, "Ni Sahihi Tanzania Kudai Fidia ya Ukoloni wa Wajerumani?", *Rai*, 4th May 2017, <http://www.pressreader.com>, last accessed on 28th March 2019.

²²⁷ Bendex, *Global Development and Colonial Power*, p. 21.

²²⁸ Balla F.Y.P. Masele, "The Unfought Maji Maji Wars: The Lessons of History are Never Learnt", *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal of Historical Research and Writing*, Vol. VII, No. 1, (2010), pp. 100–101.

²²⁹ Khoti Chilomba Kamanga, "The Maji Maji War: An International Humanitarian Law Perspective", *Tanzania Zamani: A Journal Historical Research and Writing*, Vol. VI, No. 2, (2009), pp. 54–65.

²³⁰ Kamanga, "The Maji Maji War", p. 54.

the Germans during the war, such as plundering, executing, “cruelty, targeting the civilian population,” causing starvation, “the mutilation of the dead bodies of fallen rebels,”²³¹ “collective punishment” and “forced relocation.”²³²

Conclusion

It can be argued that Maji Maji, as the most violent and ‘famous’ anti-colonial war to have erupted in German Tanganyika, has continued to foster collective memories of the atrocities committed by the German colonial army.²³³ Both the narrative and cultural memories of the war analyzed in this chapter have revealed that trans-generational traumatic memories of the war have occupied and continue to occupy the minds of the Ngoni people. Having witnessed the annihilation of the people they had once revered as their rulers soon after the end of the war, the Ngoni people wanted to openly express their traumatic feelings by commemorating their dead heroes and heroines but given the violent nature of the colonial state the odds were against them. They did not have the courage to freely exercise their freedom of commemorating or venerating their war dead as this was likely to cause trouble. During the struggle for independence, Nyerere evoked memories of Maji Maji to defend his argument for independence at the United Nations. Still burdened and haunted by horrific memories of the war, some Ngoni elders could not bring themselves to openly support TANU’s campaign for they feared that history would repeat itself. After independence, commemoration of Maji Maji began to take shape at both the local and national level. The Ngoni’s fear of commemorating and venerating the war heroes vanished. Monuments were erected and commemorations of war heroes and heroines started in earnest. Gwassa wrote: “since independence, monuments of important Maji Maji Sites have been built or replenished and the demand for them is ever growing.”²³⁴

Although the Ngoni, in collaboration with the regional government, managed to construct the Majimaji Memorial Museum in the 1980s and supervise it, decades passed before it was transformed into the National War Museum for various reasons. First, the National Museum of Tanzania (in Dar es Salaam), which was

²³¹ Kamanga, “The Maji Maji War”, p. 64.

²³² Kamanga, “The Maji Maji War”, p. 65.

²³³ The report prepared by the government during the event to mark 50 years of the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in April 2014, cited in the Maji Maji War as a famous anti-colonial movement. See, for example, JMT, “Taarifa ya Miaka 50 ya Muungano wa Tanganyika na Zanzibar 1964–2014”, April, 2014, p. 2.

²³⁴ Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*. p. 21.

responsible for the development of museum activities in the country, lacked finance and personnel and so was unable to extend its services or construct new museums.²³⁵ As a result, all regional museums were placed under the regional government, which allocated meagre resources for museum activities.²³⁶ Second, the National Museum of Tanzania seemed to give most of its attention to the development of museums elsewhere other than Songea.²³⁷ Third, national Hero's Day, which was observed on 1st September each year, might have discouraged further attempts by the government to establish a national war museum.²³⁸ But why was the status of the Maji Maji Memorial site changed from private to regional or from regional to national? According to Assmann and Shortt, the status of any memory may change from informal to public, from unofficial to official or from private to public.²³⁹ Memory becomes official when "it is organized by the state or important political actors."²⁴⁰

The discussion on collective war memories suggests that commemorative events linked to Maji Maji have not only led to public awareness of the war in Songea but have also inflamed feelings of the need for reparation and restitution at both the local and national level.²⁴¹ However, these events have achieved one more thing. They have served the purpose of popularizing the heroic personalities involved in the Maji Maji war.²⁴² This chapter has focused on Songea, a heroic town named after *nduna* Songea Mbano, but, due to lack of space, has excluded numerous other isolated yet important Maji Maji memorial sites existing in different areas of southern Tanzania. To gain a better understanding of spatial variations in the cultural remembrances relating to Maji Maji, further research is needed in those areas not included in this chapter.

²³⁵ E.B. Njombe, "Makumbusho ya Taifa: Historia, Shughuli Zake na Yaliyomo Ndani Yake" (With an Abstract in English), National Museum of Tanzania Occasional Paper No. 3, 1974, p. 50.

²³⁶ Njombe, "Makumbusho", pp. 50–54.

²³⁷ NRC, No.HU/SH/CCM 22/Vol. 1, "Kumbukumbu za Mkutano wa Kamati ya Uongozi", 20th May 1986, p. 4.

²³⁸ Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War*, p. 21.

²³⁹ Assmann and Shortt, "Memory and Political Change", p. 9.

²⁴⁰ Jan Kubik and Michael Bernhard, "A Theory of the Politics of Memory", in Id., *Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 7–8.

²⁴¹ For public awareness of Maji Maji see, for example, P. Malekela Samson, "An Assessment of Public Awareness on the Role of Maji Maji War toward Tanzania's Independence Struggles (1940s–1950s): A case of Songea District", Unpublished MA Dissertation, Saint Augustine University of Tanzania, September 2014, pp. 1–55.

²⁴² According to John Iliffe, "African history lacks personalities" and Tanzania is no exception. See, for example, John Iliffe, "Introduction", in John Iliffe (ed), *Modern Tanzanians: A Volume of Biographies* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1973), p. 5.