

4 Separations and Connections: Colonizing Space

By the time Ujiji had turned into a fully fledged urban centre, where people from around and across Lake Tanganyika appropriated a translocal urban identity in response to profound transformations during the second half of the nineteenth century, the town began losing clout within the new context of German East Africa.¹ Ujiji's population grew larger than it had ever been, yet this was in itself a corollary of the collapse of the caravan trade complex that had given rise to the town in the first place. People coming from the western leg of the caravan trade complex, formerly enslaved people, and refugees from the war-ridden Congo Free State as well as people attracted by the job opportunities offered by the new colonial authorities joined a town population that hitherto consisted of people facilitating the caravan trade complex, be they coastal traders or people provisioning the town and the caravans through fishery and agriculture. Ujiji became, to some extent, the drain of the collapsing caravan trade complex west of Lake Tanganyika, while at the same time attracting people from around the lake who "followed the fish", who moved to the relatively fertile environment of Ujiji, or who came to work on one of the construction sites, which the German colonial administration initiated.² Characterized by the fallout from the collapsing caravan trade complex, on the one hand, and the appeal to people from around the lake, on the other, this ambivalence would underpin the town for decades.

Parallel to Ujiji's growth-in-decline, German colonial authorities shifted the centre of gravity of the Kigoma-Ujiji area from Ujiji to the Bay of Kigoma. Kigoma rose to prominence not only on the local scale of the urban area. It also became highly significant both on the regional scale of colonial rule in the western part of German East Africa, where Kigoma functioned as an island of colonial authority,³ and on the global scale of long-distance trade between the Congo basin and the

1 Similar processes of urban identity building have been studied for the cases of the Swahili coast and the Manyema people across Tanzania. Fabian, *Making Identity*; Katharina Zöller, "Tracing the Past of an Urban Group: Manyema in Urban Tanzania", *Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers* 18 (2018): 18–39.

2 Hino, "Social Stratification", 55. Interview KU33, Mwanga, 9 July 2012 (the father of the interviewee was a carpenter for the German colonial administration in Kigoma-Ujiji).

3 For the insular ("Inseln von Herrschaft") or archipelagic ("an archipelago of enclaves") character of colonial presence, see Michael Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika: Expeditionen, Militär und Verwaltung seit 1880* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2005); Bram Cleys and Bruno De Meulder, "Imagining a Christian Territory: Changing Spatial Strategies in the Missionary Outposts of Scheut (Kasai, Congo, 1891–1940)" in *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, (ed.) Fassil Demissie (London: Routledge, 2012), 214 and 220.

Indian Ocean, where Kigoma constituted an infrastructural hub linking the central railway – under construction until 1914 – with navigation on the lake much like Ujiji had done between the caravans and the lake in former times.

This transformation did not occur overnight. In this chapter, I interpret how German colonization induced transformations in Kigoma-Ujiji on these different scales through the lens of separations and connections and of disruptions and continuities. The outline of this chapter on the German colonial period juggles with these different dimensions. I move between East Central African regional, territorial colonial, and local urban scales, while also shifting between colonial administration and urban population. First, I look at how German colonial authorities saw Kigoma-Ujiji in their wider scheme of colonial conquest, territorialization, and free trade in the Congo basin. The second subchapter presents the realignment of the urban area, including a spatial shift from Ujiji to Kigoma, during the German colonial period. During the time when the German colonial administration invested in infrastructures connecting Central Africa to the Indian Ocean via Kigoma, it also installed and managed separations between parts of the town, between parts of the colonial protectorate, and between colonial territories, thereby using Kigoma as regional headquarters. The third subchapter reconstructs changing power relations in the urban area during the decades of transformation from coastal (Arab-Swahili) to colonial (German) dominance, based on a dispute over property. In this reconstruction, the perspective of people living in Kigoma-Ujiji comes to the fore, as does the heuristic and hermeneutic challenge to interpret and combine sources across the divide of a regime change. The chapter shows that obvious disruptions in dealing with space, property, and power could never completely erase the continuities from precolonial to colonial times.

Whereas German – and later also Belgian and, to a lesser extent, British – colonizers initially saw Kigoma-Ujiji as a stepping stone towards trade from and to Congo and conquest or control of Burundi and Rwanda, there was, at the same time, little colonial interest in the place itself, in its own right, and in the people living there. For the townspeople, Kigoma-Ujiji was a place of transformation; for colonial administrations, it was a place for goods, troops, or people to move through.

4.1 A Hub for Colonial Conquest and Commerce

Although the beginning of the colonial period in German East Africa is sometimes associated with the handful of declarations of submission which Carl Peters collected in the name of the Society for German Colonization (*Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation*) in 1884, with the General Act of the Berlin Congo Conference on 26 February 1885, or with the declaration by imperial charter (*Schutzbrief*) of

the German protectorate the next day, it should be noted that all of these historical references primarily concerned the areas close to the Indian Ocean coast. In the Far West of the imperial protectorate, it would take until 1896 before the first German military representative would establish a permanent German colonial presence on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, beginning in Ujiji. Considering the frequenting of the area by coastal caravans already for more than half a century, the numerous expeditions that had been passing through Ujiji since the 1850s, the settlements of Protestant (London Missionary Society) and Catholic (White Fathers) missionaries on the shores of Lake Tanganyika since the 1870s, and the establishment of stations by the Belgian King Leopold II's International African Association on both sides of the lake in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the German colonial appearance in the area seems remarkably late.

The German colonial explorer and administrator Hermann von Wissmann had visited Ujiji and the Lake Tanganyika region on his journeys through Africa in the 1880s, but back then his expeditions were not on behalf of the German Empire. The title of his first travel report, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika von West nach Ost: von 1880 bis 1883*, can barely conceal that the expedition took place under the aegis of the German branch of the Belgian King Leopold II's allegedly "International" African Association.⁴ During his second journey, which took him to Ujiji in 1887, he was directly in the service of Leopold.⁵ However, in January 1896, when he dispatched captain (*Hauptmann*) Hans von Ramsay to Ujiji in order to found a military station, Wissmann did so as governor of German East Africa. Ramsay was accompanied by Mr. Hoffmann, a representative of the German East Africa Company (*Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft*).⁶ Both men arrived at Lake Tanganyika in May of that year. It thus makes sense to take this date as the beginning of the German colonization of Ujiji.

Two expeditions by Sigl in 1893 and by Leue in 1895 could also qualify as the local beginning of German colonization although these expedition did not yet lead to a permanent German presence in the town. Michael Pesek presents it as follows:

[W]hen [. . .] the first expedition reached Ujiji in 1893, the German officer had sent delegations to inform the local population of their arrival. Near Ujiji, the expedition halted to wait for delegations of the town's elites and to negotiate with them. After the negotiations, the

4 Hermann von Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika von West nach Ost: von 1880 bis 1883 ausgeführt von Paul Pogge und Hermann Wissmann* (Berlin: Walther & Apolant, 1890).

5 von Wissmann, *My Second Journey*.

6 Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde (BArch), R 1001 Reichskolonialamt, Band 219: Acten betreffend Bezirksamt Udjidji vom 13. Januar 1896 bis 20. Juli 1907, Bericht vom Kaiserlichen Gouverneur von Deutsch-Ostafrika von Wissmann an Reichskanzler, Dar es Salaam, 13.01.1896.

expedition entered the town with a parade, military music and the flag in front of the troops. It was the beginning of colonial rule in Ujiji.⁷

However, as is always the case when interpreting the history of Ujiji, we should – from a territorial logic – not only look east but also across the lake. Colonial conquest in the Congo Free State had already brought enduring havoc in the first half of the 1890s, culminating in a fierce war against the coalition of coastal traders and *waungwana* in the East of the Congo Free State between 1892 and 1894. This war had a direct effect on Ujiji in the form of defeated Arab-Swahili and *waungwana* traders-turned-warriors, war refugees (which partly overlaps with but is not identical to the former), and the largely collapsed caravan trade complex in the region.



Figure 4: Encampment of Porters behind the Railway Infrastructure of Kigoma (1910s).⁸

⁷ Michael Pesek, "Colonial Conquest and the Struggle for the Presence of the Colonial State in German East Africa, 1885–1903" in *Inventing Collateral Damage: Civilian Casualties, War, and Empire*, (eds.) Stephen J. Rockel and Rick Halpern (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2010), 170. Also see *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1894: 10, Bericht Sigls vom 30.09.1893.

⁸ Bildarchiv der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, Bildnummer 016–1287-14: Trägerlager Kigoma oberhalb des Bahnhofes.

This is not to say that caravans lost their importance as a long-distance infrastructure of transportation.⁹ Even after the completion of the central railway, portage was still required to carry loads to and from the railway stations (Figure 4). However, the whole commercial, political, and cultural system depicted in the previous chapter had lost paramountcy in tying East and Central Africa together. Thanks to the principle of free trade in the entire conventional Congo basin – i.e. the zone defined as free trade zone at the 1884 to 1885 Berlin Congo Conference –, trade from the Congo Free State to the Indian Ocean via the caravan route continued, but the coastal merchants no longer dominated this long-distance trade through the region. On the one hand, a growing share of trade goods from the Congo Free State were shipped west rather than east. On the other hand, the agents in charge of the eastbound trade became European-led and Indian-operated rather than Arab and Swahili – or Omani and Mrima. Ujiji was in decline also as hub in the caravan trade. But as mentioned before, given the arrival of people leaving the Congo Free State, the town's population was on the rise, reaching an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁰ Taken together, Ujiji was already profoundly affected by the impacts of colonization before the first German colonial base was established there.

The assets that made Ujiji a strategic location endured: fertile soil, access to Lake Tanganyika, vicinity to the saltpans of Uvinza, access to the Kingdoms of the Great Lakes region, and a long-distance transportation infrastructure overland and on the lake. On top of that, Ujiji became a border town, as the lake had now become the colonial territorial division between German East Africa and the Congo Free State. Despite Ujiji's dropping positionality in the caravan trade complex and vis-à-vis Congo, the town remained a strategic regional hub. Ujiji and soon also Kigoma became a base for colonial conquest towards the Great Lakes region. Long-distance trade also remained important within the free trade zone of the conventional Congo basin and was about to receive an additional boost with the construction of the central railway connecting Dar es Salaam at the Indian Ocean with Kigoma at Lake Tanganyika. However, contrary to the nineteenth century, this long-distance trade was increasingly controlled, on the one hand, by Europeans and, on the other, by Indian traders who no longer stayed on the Indian Ocean coast as they had done in the time of the caravan trade complex but instead moved upcountry with their networks and capital, thus replacing the position of Arabs and Swahili.¹¹

⁹ Greiner, *Human Portage*, especially Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁰ Brown, "Ujiji", 228–229.

¹¹ Brown, "Ujiji", 240–246; Mc Dow, *Buying Time*.

This transition took almost two decades. At first, German colonizers built their military station or boma in Ujiji,¹² which was already well-connected and urbanized as we have seen in the previous chapter. By the end of the German period, on the eve of the First World War, the Bay of Kigoma had become the focal point of German presence in the area. The fluctuation between Ujiji and Kigoma as centres of gravity in the area would continue throughout the twentieth century. In order to understand the shifting constellation within the urban area, we need to tackle the interplay of local, regional, and global dynamics.

Whereas Ujiji had combined a central position in the regional trade, a provisioning function in the long-distance trade, and a short-lived pivotal role in the military-political control of the northern Lake Tanganyika region during the heydays of the caravan trade, it continued to serve three dimensions of centrality at the beginning of the colonial period as base for military conquest, as a commercial and transportation hub, and as regional centre for sleeping sickness control. None of these centralities are pure continuities, yet there are elements of continuity underpinning the operations centred on Ujiji and Kigoma: Germans followed in the footsteps of their Arab-Swahili predecessors; the remaining Arab-Swahili leaders, who had not been defeated in the colonial war of conquest in Congo, accommodated to the new strongmen; while the chiefs on different (paramount, military, and spiritual)¹³ levels behaved as cooperatively as they had done with the Arab-Swahili before. The Germans appointed an Arab leader (Msabah bin Njem) in the town and Jiji leaders outside. Basically, the whole political order stayed in place, albeit with a new overlord. It was relatively easy to take over Ujiji, because it had already been proto-colonized before. However, below the political surface, there were commercial, military, and demographic crises on both sides of the lake, which decisively affected the town life in Ujiji.

A first – albeit relatively ephemeral – commercial disruption was provoked by Hoffmann, the above-mentioned agent of the German East Africa Company, who had arrived with Ramsay in 1896. Paying prices that might have seemed reasonable on the coast, he caused the prices to double within a year around the North of Lake Tanganyika, thus disrupting the regional market for ivory. He was also involved in smuggling activities with the Congo Free State and connected one of his trading expeditions with a Belgian military excursion, thereby harming

12 TNA, German Records (G), 7/13: Grundstücks- und Gebäude-Nachweisungen, Bd. 5: 1905–1908 – folio 97–98, Situationsplan der Militärstation sowie Grundriß der Boma Ujiji, 1907.

13 In the case of the Jiji authorities, the paramount chief was the *mwami*, the military or administrative chiefs were the *watwale*, appointed by the *mwami*, and the spiritual chiefs were the *wateko*, who administered the land and its fertility (see Subchapter 3.3.1.).

German interests.¹⁴ He was sent away, and henceforth the German authorities favoured Arab-Swahili traders to retake their positions in the market. Yet, this incident lays bare one of the weaknesses of the Central African market: its profitability was based on the tremendous price gap between coast and interior, which kept the primarily Arab-Swahili-led caravan trade complex and the primarily Indian-led financial sector on the coast in business but could easily be subverted by more direct coastal interference in the interior. Within the next decade, Indian traders would appear in Ujiji, expanding their commercial networks from the Indian Ocean coast to Lake Tanganyika (and beyond), and thus pushing the Arab-Swahili intermediaries to shopkeeping and retail trade in the area.

Regional or lacustrine trade showed the strongest continuity and would continue to do so throughout the twentieth century. The only complication was the “Congolese” – i.e. by the Congo Free State – effort to prevent trade across the lake. The prime concern of the Congo Free State were export goods like ivory, hides, rubber, and, later, also copper; but their attempt to curtail trade to the east also affected the regional trade across the lake. Strictly speaking, the Congo Free State was bound by the General Act of the Berlin Congo Conference and therefore had to allow for free trade in the conventional Congo basin, which is roughly speaking the hydrographic Congo basin extended eastwards to the Indian Ocean. Through a system of concessions, they tried to contain who was entitled to trade where, thus providing a contentious legal basis to treat eastbound trade as contraband.¹⁵ Germans were strongly in favour of continued trade between East Congo and the Indian Ocean as well as across and around the lake, which is unmistakably demonstrated by the investments in the construction of a railway from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma and in the building of the Götzen steamship, back then the largest freshwater ship in Africa. However, this trade was hindered by opposite politics on the Congolese side of the lake.

There were also military confrontations in the Congo Free State, which affected the town of Ujiji. The Congolese colonial army or *Force Publique* had been able to defeat the Arab-Swahili conglomerate in the east of the colony thanks not only to better armaments but also to Congolese allies and troops. However, Belgian officers betrayed their Congolese allies, as became clear in the summary execution of Ngongo Lutete and in the maltreatment of Congolese soldiers in the *Force Publique*.¹⁶ The anti-Arab campaign lasted from 1892 to 1894. But in fact, the

¹⁴ Brown, “Ujiji”, 252; Chrétien, “Le commerce du sel”, 411.

¹⁵ Frans Buelens, *Congo 1885–1960: Een financieel-economische geschiedenis* (Berchem: EPO, 2007); Guy Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo, 1885–1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁶ Verhaegen, *Rébellions au Congo*, Tôme II; De Boeck, *Baoni*.

colonial war of conquest would not end for at least another decade – although now dubbed rebellions or mutinies, instead. The three so-called Batetela rebellions (of 1895, 1897, and 1900) and the *wahuni* mutiny in the *Force Publique* of 1907 to 1908 are worth mentioning here. Taken together, several thousand *Force Publique* soldiers and their followers left Congo, fleeing to German East Africa, in particular to the northeastern shores of Lake Tanganyika. The German colonial authorities welcomed these trained soldiers with active war experience and several of them were integrated in the German East African colonial army or *Schutztruppe*.¹⁷ Many of these refugees, including wives and children, settled in and around Ujiji.¹⁸ It is unknown how many additional refugees joined the Batetela and *wahuni* soldiers or fled the violence that accompanied the so-called rebels' trek through Congo. But the population most probably grew during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁹ The population did not just grow, but the proportion of inhabitants from across the lake versus those from the Jiji lands shifted towards a decisive "Congolese" preponderance in Kigoma-Ujiji.

This urban population growth occurred despite a severe sleeping sickness epidemic ravaging the region during the same decade. We know from the literature that epidemics have been physically, spatially, and rhetorically (ab)used to impose colonial rule and control over populations and their movement.²⁰ Notwithstanding, there is ample evidence that sleeping sickness indeed led to a reduction by close to half of the population along the northern shores of Lake Tanganyika.²¹ To be clear, a reduction by half of the population does not mean that half of the population died. It also reflects that many moved away from the lake to the hills where the disease had less impact. Around the same period, the hills were heavily affected by the cattle plague, which undermined the political order as well as the resilience of the population,²² but this is of minor direct relevance to our topic. It

17 Tanja Bühner, *Die kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegsführung 1885 bis 1918* (München: Oldenbourg, 2011); Michelle R. Moyd, *Violent intermediaries: African soldiers, conquest, and everyday colonialism in German East Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).

18 TNA, Provincial Book: W. Ronayne, "Ujiji: The Wa-huni", 1923.

19 Brown, "Ujiji", 228–229.

20 Maryinez Lyons, "From 'Death Camps' to Cordon Sanitaire: The Development of Sleeping Sickness Policy in the Uele District of the Belgian Congo, 1903–1914", *The Journal of African History* 26, no. 1 (1985): 69–91; Manuela Bauche, *Medizin und Herrschaft: Malaria bekämpfung in Kamerun, Ostafrika und Ostfriesland (1890–1919)* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2017).

21 Christian Thibon, *Histoire démographique du Burundi* (Paris: Karthala, 2004), 32–45.

22 Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology control and economic development in East African history: The case of Tanganyika, 1850–1950* (London: James Currey, 1995).

does show, though, that throughout the region the period of colonization was a disruptive one in several regards.

German imperial medical and military services responded to the sleeping sickness by closing borders with Northern Rhodesia and the Congo Free State, by territorially dividing the lacustrine area into sleeping sickness zones with centres to concentrate the sick, and by militarily protecting these centres. Ujiji was one of three such centres along the northern Lake Tanganyika and it was the principal one as far as medical and military staff was concerned.²³ We know from research in Congo that the concentration of sick people in camps attracted relatives or servants taking care of the sick.²⁴ This implies that the roughly 200 sick people in the Ujiji camp may have attracted an equal or larger number of town dwellers in their wake, at least temporarily.

The fundamental change underpinning all centralities, continuities, and crises was the new territorial regime of the colonial order, which drew a border right next to Ujiji and introduced the principle of effective occupation. This principle forced the German – and the “Congolese”²⁵ – colonizer to be effectively and durably present in the entire colonial territory. This was *de facto* most urgent in the border areas, which could directly be contested by neighbouring colonial powers. Not surprisingly, one of the first expeditions that Ramsay undertook was to triangulate the border with the Congo Free State at the northern tip of Lake Tanganyika.²⁶ In line with the European territorial logic of colonization, but contrary to the strategies of Mwinyi Heri and Rumaliza in the 1880s, which occupied the northern shores of Lake Tanganyika but left Burundi at bay after failed attempts to intrude, German colonizers were expected to take hold of Burundi as well. The military post at Ujiji was the initial stepping stone towards conquering Burundi. Furthermore, German colonizers also used the strip along the lake, already under control of Arab-Swahili powerholders and their *waungwana* allies, which the German colonizers *de facto* took over. As had been the case in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Burundi proved difficult to subdue, and in the end, the Germans accepted a large degree of autonomy for Burundi – as well as

23 BArch, R86 Reichsgesundheitsamt, 1.3.10. Tropenhygiene, Band 2618: Bekämpfung der Schlafkrankheit in Deutsch-Ostafrika, Bd. 1. Jahre 1907–4. Januar 1909.

24 Lyons, “From ‘Death Camps’ to Cordon Sanitaire”.

25 The adjective “Congolese” refers to the Belgian King Leopold II’s Congo Free State until 1908 and to the Belgian Congo for the remainder of the colonial period, until 1960.

26 AAB, AE, 243–249: Règlement des frontières avec l’Allemagne, a. Frontières de la Ruzizi Kivu, 1896–1910.

for Rwanda and Bukoba, further north and northeast.²⁷ Together, being home to nearly half of the entire population of German East Africa,²⁸ these three areas became residences (*Residenturen*) instead of districts (*Bezirksämter*), indicating the recognition of the autonomy of local chiefs – assuming a paramountcy of the *mwami* – and the prohibition of European settlement in these relatively fertile and densely populated areas. Ujiji was the final station of German direct control in the northwest of German East Africa. Thus, not only the border with Congo but also the border between direct and indirect colonial occupation within German East Africa characterized Ujiji. The basecamp for the indirect occupation of the residence of Burundi, however, soon moved to Bujumbura, on the northeastern tip of Lake Tanganyika. For Rwanda, Kigali became the German resident's seat and Bukoba was overseen from the town with the same name. But Ujiji remained a town of transit, an interface between not just different territories but territories of a different nature.

The distinction I make between direct and indirect occupation, between districts and residences, should not be confused with the well-known colonial categories of direct and indirect rule. One of the continuities with the proto-colonial Arab-Swahili political order was the systematic application of indirect rule, i.e., leaving leadership in place and imposing colonial demands like taxation – in money, labour or kind – through this leadership. For the land of the Jiji, the paramount chief was the *mwami*; at the time of German occupation, *mwami* Lusimbi or Rusimbi II. Such a system of indirect rule was a means of governing after effective military or colonial conquest, contrary to the situation in the residences, where effective occupation could only be achieved after a settlement that recognized the autonomy of the local leader – in the case of Burundi the *mwami* Mwezi Gisabo and in Rwanda *mwami* Musinga. Although the Jiji, the Rundi, and the Ruanda leaders were all *mwami*, their position within the colonial order was different: the former being the recognized chief in a system of indirect rule, the latter two maintaining recognized autonomy with a German resident by his side. Nevertheless, the position of the Burundian and Rwandan *mwami*'s was already severely weakened by succession conflicts and by the impact of cattle and human epidemics on demography, economy, and the *mwami*'s power bases. German support saved their positions and, at the same time, secured the effective occupation

27 Eckhart G. Franz and Peter Geissler, *Das Deutsch-Ostafrika-Archiv: Inventar der Abteilung „German Records“ im Nationalarchiv der Vereinigten Republik Tansania, Dar-es-Salaam* (Marburg: Archivschule Marburg, 1973), 17–18.

28 Franz and Geissler, *Das Deutsch-Ostafrika-Archiv*, 35–36.

of Burundi and Rwanda, but that is beyond the scope of this study about Kigoma-Ujiji.²⁹

4.2 The Re-Alignment of Kigoma-Ujiji under German Rule

While the regional role of Kigoma-Ujiji in relation to military, commercial, and medical agendas in the region was settled in the course of the 20-odd years of German rule over the area, the spatial configuration of the Kigoma-Ujiji area itself changed as well. The political and commercial centre of gravity shifted from Ujiji town to the Bay of Kigoma. This could be read as a late consequence of the fact that in the 1880s, the market of Kigoma-Gungu became at least as important as the one of Ugoi-Kawele – i.e. Ujiji – hence the shift from Ujiji to Kigoma had already started in precolonial times.³⁰ However, as already argued, that had been a shift in markets not in urbanity. Ujiji remained the main – if not the only – urban centre and, as we have seen, the German colonizers built their local presence in Ujiji on collaborations with the urban protagonists. The parallel cooperation with so-called traditional leaders was equally important for the establishment of colonial rule but concerned rural areas, where the Germans themselves did not settle – at least not in this part of German East Africa. Given that most of the urban population had other ethnic backgrounds than the surrounding rural area, the distinction between urban protagonists and rural leaders reflected and entrenched a separation between town and countryside. The colonial administration in the area was located in the town, initially in Ujiji and later relocated to Kigoma.

In Ujiji, the German occupation forces established themselves at the margins of the existing urban centre, with direct access to the lake and to the main marketplace, directly adjacent to the mission station that had been established by the Catholic White Fathers in 1879. The *boma* or fortress, flanked by a lazaret and complemented with a postal service, was situated between the town of Ujiji and the newly established village for the soldiers (*askari*) of the German *Schutztruppe*, thereby envisaging a spatial separation between different groups of colonial subjects. The embedding of the German military headquarters is reminiscent of the panopticon principle and betrays a strategy of colonization that aims at control

²⁹ Alison Des Forges, *Defeat Is the Only Bad News: Rwanda under Musinga, 1897–1931* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014); Geert Castryck, “Mwami Musinga et la sauvegarde de la frontière de la Kagera entre le Rwanda et le Tanganyika: le tournant trans-impérial après la Première Guerre mondiale”, *Revue d'Histoire Contemporaine de l'Afrique* 3 (October 2022): 129–143.

³⁰ See chapter 3; Gooding, “Lake Tanganyika”, 243.

but not at settlement.³¹ Apart from the colonial – at that time primarily military and secondarily medical and administrative³² – apparatus, a European or German presence in Ujiji was not part of the urban planning.

Very early on, the Bay of Kigoma was considered the place where European colonists and businesses could establish themselves undisturbed by the Muslim town of Ujiji. Moving the seat of the colonial administration from Ujiji to Kigoma, however, was not a shift inside an urban area or from one town to another. The picture in the next chapter (Figure 7) gives an impression of Kigoma a decade after the shift from Ujiji to Kigoma. Despite the operation of the port, the railway, and the colonial administration, which must have required a significant African workforce, we observe very little habitation. Kigoma in itself was not yet a town. It had a market and, by the end of the German colonial period, also a railway station and a lake port, but that was just the beginning of building an urban Kigoma along colonial principles. Three aspects of these colonial principles of town planning are worth mentioning here: infrastructure, racial segregation, and property.

The main reason for the German move from Ujiji to Kigoma was undoubtedly infrastructural: the decision to build a railway from the Indian Ocean to Lake Tanganyika, which implied a seaport and a lake port on both ends of the railway. The seaport at Dar es Salaam is not our main concern here,³³ but the lake port required a deeper steeper harbour than Ujiji could provide. As mentioned before, motor vessels with relatively deep drafts could not call at Ujiji. There was no place closer to Ujiji than the Bay of Kigoma where the Germans could plan a lake port.³⁴

However, apart from the question of infrastructure, the mere fact of having a (new) European town set apart from the pre-existing African town is in line with what we know from the history of colonial urban planning. It was the rule of the game to have segregated cities in colonial contexts. The typical colonial urban layout consisted of a European part of the city separated by a neutral zone or buffer from an African or indigenous part of town. Medical, hygiene, security, and racist reasons were used interchangeably to buttress such segregationist spatial organi-

31 AAB, Gouverneur Général (GG), 3598: Traduction 1918 Rapport de la mission chargée du levé des différents ports du Lac Tanganika (document allemande 1914), avec plans.

32 For the intertwinement between colonial and medical, see Bauche, *Medizin und Herrschaft*.

33 For a perspective from the Indian Ocean coast, see Steven Fabian, "Curing the Cancer of the Colony: Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, and Socioeconomic Struggle in German East Africa", *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 40, no. 3 (2007): 441–469; Brennan et al., *Dar es Salaam*.

34 For an in-depth analysis of German colonial infrastructural politics in Africa, see Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas, 1880 bis 1960* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004).

zation. In the East and Southern African contexts, there was usually a third part of town which could be interpreted as part of the buffer and was destined for Indians and Arabs.³⁵ They usually fulfilled commercial roles in town. As Nightingale and others have shown, this pattern of segregation was to a large degree a fiction. The segregated town could only function thanks to the failure of segregation and the porosity of allegedly concrete divides.³⁶ Nevertheless, it was the spatial organizing principle of town planning and has affected urban life and urban layout often until today.

Roughly speaking, two scenarios could occur: either there already was an urban centre and the colonial urban planners imposed segregation upon the pre-existing town, or a colonial city was founded and planned in an area where there was no town yet. In this regard, Kigoma-Ujiji is a hybrid. The town of Kigoma was planned where there was no town yet, but it was so close to a pre-existing town that it cannot be seen apart from Ujiji. This ambivalence would determine the entire twentieth-century history of Kigoma-Ujiji until the urban area completely grew together.

Although the nautical conditions in the Bay of Kigoma were a crucial element in the decision to move the colonial centre of gravity in the Lake Tanganyika region from Ujiji to Kigoma, this move also resembles the decision to relocate the capital of German East Africa from Bagamoyo to Dar es Salaam.³⁷ The role that rivalries and hostility both towards German East Africa and between different coastal factions played in towns like Bagamoyo and Pangani was not that important in Ujiji, if only because there were only a handful of each of these – German, Omani/Arab or coastal Mrima – groups present. The vast majority of the population stemmed from around Lake Tanganyika or the defunct Manyema-centred caravan trade complex. Nonetheless, the German move from Ujiji to Kigoma made the colonizer less dependent on “Swahili” (either from the coast or from Congo) support. However, in line with Nightingale’s segregation argument, this move did not make the Germans independent from African labour as such and, very early on, the three-tier European-Indian-African spatial organization was to be reproduced in the smaller area of Kigoma proper.

35 Sometimes also so-called “second rate” or poor whites; see Sofie Boonen and Johan Lagae, “A City Constructed by ‘des gens d’ailleurs’: Urban Development and Migration Policies in Colonial Lubumbashi, 1910–1930”, *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und Vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 25, no. 4 (2015): 52–70.

36 Carl H. Nightingale, *Segregation: A global history of divided cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). For a recent analysis of the spatial making of Dar es Salaam under German colonial rule, see Patrick C. Hege, *Dividing Dar: Race, Space, and Colonial Construction in German Occupied Daressalam, 1850–1920* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2025).

37 Fabian, “Curing the Cancer of the Colony”.

With the creation of Kigoma as a town, we see a double separation: on the one hand, a separation between a colonial Kigoma and a Muslim Ujiji and, on the other, within Kigoma, a separation between a German administrative and residential area, a business zone for Indians, and a rail and port sector. African inhabitants of Kigoma or the indispensable workforce was moved to a new African neighbourhood, Mwanga, one kilometre away from the centre of Kigoma, with the Indian business zone in-between.³⁸

The relatively short German period in Kigoma-Ujiji between 1896 and 1916 has left a material imprint on the town until today, having compartmentalized the urban area, infrastructurally connected Kigoma, and left three monumental constructions behind: the Hotel Kaiserhof, which has become the headquarters of the Kigoma region, the railway station, and the steamer Götzen. Meant as modern investments at the time, they are still functioning more than a century later and have been turned into colonial heritage at the same time.

What may seem quite neat on the drawing table was thoroughly convoluted with pre-existing power relations, property claims, alliances and connections, continuities and disruptions, and agents who would continue to play a role long after the Germans had abandoned the town in 1916.

4.3 “My Slave Sold all of Kigoma”: The Transition to a Colonial Order

The transformations described in this chapter can be illustrated by reconstructing a concrete case of property rights in the port of Kigoma, which evokes the transition from proto-colonial to colonial, the relation between Jiji and Swahili and between coastal and Congolese, as well as the challenge to interpret colonial sources.³⁹ As is so often the case, much is found out only with hindsight. Earlier attempts to reconstruct a situation and the sources emanating from these efforts sometimes provide the historian with a glimpse of past events which was not even accessible to most contemporaries. After all, the fragmentary availability of information and underlying

³⁸ This description is based on a bad-quality sketch found in AAB, Archives allemandes du Ruanda-Urundi (RU), 5169 (6664), 13(A): Construction d'un hôtel pour le chemin de fer et plans de construction à Kigoma. Cartes. Plans. 1913–1914.

³⁹ A previous version of this subchapter has been published as Geert Castryck, “My Slave Sold All of Kigoma”: Power Relations, Property Rights and the Historian’s Quest for Understanding” in *Sources and Methods for African History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Adam Jones*, (eds.) Geert Castryck, Silke Strickrodt and Katja Werthmann (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2016), 317–335.

interests were and still are part and parcel of human interaction. Hiding, lying, and telling partial truths can reveal as much as they conceal.⁴⁰

Starting from one archival record,⁴¹ I report the tenacious efforts by colonial officers to reconstruct a property claim in early twentieth century Kigoma and, from there, dig deeper into biographical backgrounds, shifting power relations, conflicting land tenure regimes, and a peculiar visual representation of space, which taken together give us a great insight into Kigoma-Ujiji in the transition from proto-colonial to colonial times.

4.3.1 Claiming Land in the Port of Kigoma

In 1903, during the German expropriation procedures preparing the construction of a new port in Kigoma, a blast from the past landed on the desks of the German colonial administration in Ujiji. In 1882, at the height of Ujiji's power, Mwinyi Akida Tayari had died, upon which his son Gosilatembo came from the coast to Ujiji to take care of his inheritance and left again seven years later. The first document in the file is a letter from Gosilatembo, dated 27 July 1903, in which he refers to a land he inherited from his father 20 odd years before. He expresses that he had received a letter from Mwinyi Hamisi bin Mwinyi Hassani telling him that his land holdings in Kigoma had been sold without his consent. At the time, Gosilatembo lived in Pangani on the Indian Ocean coast and wrote the letter in Kiswahili to the German colonial authorities in Ujiji. He was assisted by the German lawyer and Swahili scholar Dr. Gustav Neuhaus,⁴² who provided an authorized German translation of his letter. This letter opened a dispute which would last for several years and the conclusion of which was still not clear by the time the file was either closed or aborted in 1906. The letter reads as follows:

⁴⁰ Luise White, "Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History", *History and Theory* 39, no. 4 (2000): 11–22.

⁴¹ TNA, G.8/352: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 1: 1902–1906.

⁴² TNA, G.8/352: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 1: 1902–1906; *Amtlicher Anzeiger für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, I. Jahrgang, No. 32, 8. November 1900. Neuhaus was a German Doctor of Law, who acted in the colonial service in German East Africa. From the position of probationary judge (*Gerichtsassessor*), he was transferred to Pangani as District Commissioner (*kommissarischer Bezirksamtmann*) in November 1900. He had been a lecturer in Swahili at the University of Berlin from 1895 until 1900 and has become renowned as an editor of Swahili manuscripts in Arabic script, particularly, of a Maulid-text (Birth of the Prophet). In other words, he was not only knowledgeable in legal affairs but also well-versed in the Swahili language and culture.

In a letter I received yesterday from Muinyihamisi bin Muinyihassani there I see that my slave Kheri has sold all of Kigoma to the Imperial Station. Kigoma is an old slave settlement of my late father Muinyi Akida Tayari. In case Muinyihamissi's information is correct, I note that Kheri acted without my order. However, I, as my father's sole heir, consent to the sale on condition that a reasonable purchase price is remitted to me. If anyone else claims the aforementioned property, please refer them to me.⁴³

Gosilatembo referred to the entire Kigoma ("ganz Kigoma") as his landed property inherited from his father (Mwinyi Akida Tayari) and claimed that it had been sold by his "slave" (Kheri/Heri) without his permission. He nevertheless was willing to sanction the transaction but demanded a just payment. From the letter also transpires that he had a functioning communication line with Mwinyi Hamisi bin Mwinyi Hassani.

Seven weeks later, on 14 September 1903, *Oberleutnant* (first lieutenant) Werner von Grawert, who was the station chief in Ujiji at the time,⁴⁴ wrote an internal report about Gosilatembo's claim. He stated that he had never heard of Gosilatembo, who must have left Ujiji at the time of Rumliza.⁴⁵ He furthermore declared that only two small plots of land had been sold years ago and a 150 metres wide section of the harbour foreshore had been declared *Kronland* (crown land) by *Oberleutnant* von Müller a few months earlier.⁴⁶ He assumed that Gosilatembo was referring to this newly declared *Kronland*. Von Grawert meaningfully added that

43 German original: "Aus einem mir gestern zugegangenen Briefe des Muinyihamisi bin Muinyihassani dort ersehe ich, dass mein Sklave Kheri ganz Kigoma an die Kaiserliche Station verkauft hat. Kigoma ist eine alte Sklavenansiedlung meines verstorbenen Vaters Muinyi Akida Tayari. Für den Fall, dass die Angabe des Muinyihamissi richtig ist, bemerke ich, dass Kheri ohne meinen Auftrag gehandelt hat. Ich willige aber, als einziger Erbe meines Vaters, in den Verkauf ein, unter der Bedingung, dass mir ein angemessener Kaufpreis überwiesen wird. Sollte sonst jemand noch Ansprüche auf das vorbezeichnete Anwesen erheben, so bitte ich, ihn an mich zu verweisen".

44 From 1898 until 1902, von Grawert had already been military commander of Usumbura (today Bujumbura) responsible for the colonization of Burundi and Rwanda. By militarily supporting the Rwandan *mwami* against a pretender – not unlike what our coastal triumvirate had done in Ujiji a few decades earlier –, von Grawert played a decisive role in getting German feet on the ground in Rwanda. By then promoted to *Hauptmann*, he would take up a second term from 1904 till 1908. During his second term, as the administrative status of Ruanda and Urundi changed, he would become the first civil Resident of Urundi in German East Africa (Helmut Strizek, *Geschenkte Kolonien: Ruanda und Burundi unter deutscher Herrschaft* [Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2006], 80–82 and 96).

45 This means the 1880s or early 1890s, when Mohamed bin Khalfan al-Barwani, aka Rumliza, was the most powerful Arab leader in the Northern Lake Tanganyika region.

46 Like von Grawert, Müller also had antecedents in the region around Bujumbura. In November 1896, then still a sergeant, he became the second commander of the military post of Kajaga on the northern tip of Lake Tanganyika on the road between Uvira and Bujumbura, which would become the German military station a year later (Bernard Lugan, *Cette Afrique qui était allemande* [Paris: Jean Picollec, 1990], 116).

the land lay fallow, which was important because a *Kronland* declaration is a legally authorized declaration of state property applied to allegedly unowned land.⁴⁷

Once the evaluation by von Grawert reached him, Gosilatembo wrote a second letter on 5 December 1903, again assisted by Dr. Neuhaus:

My father, Akida Tayari, died in Ujiji in 1882. I left from here the same year and lived for 7 years on the Kigoma estate inherited from my father. There were about 50 mud-brick houses, 32 slaves and numerous mango trees on the property when I returned to Pangani in 1889. Since then I have not been back to Ujiji, but have exercised my right of ownership through my slave overseer Kheri. I have also been in written communication with him until very recently.

I deny that the land in question is unowned and request that the following people living in Ujiji be examined as witnesses:

1. Munyihamissi bin Hassani
2. Salim bin Munyiheri,
3. Hasani bin Musa
4. Masud bin Hamed el Turkey.

I hereby submit a sketch I made of the piece of land I am claiming and ask for the Imperial Administration's decision on the indemnification question.⁴⁸

In his second letter, Gosilatembo thus provides further details about his antecedents and his property claim, thereby using references to mango trees, more or less durable buildings, uninterrupted communication and caretaking, as well as witnesses, which are of relevance in connection with the *Kronland* legislation and

⁴⁷ John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule, 1905–1912* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 127.

⁴⁸ German original: "Mein Vater, Akida Tayari, ist im Jahre 1882 in Ujiji gestorben. Ich bin noch in demselben Jahre von hier dorthin aufgebrochen und habe 7 Jahre lang auf dem vom Vater ererbten Besitztum Kigoma gewohnt. Auf demselben befanden sich ca. 50 Lehmziegelhäuser, 32 Sklaven sowie zahlreiche Mangobäume, als ich im Jahre 1889 nach Pangani zurückkehrte. Seitdem bin ich nicht mehr in Ujiji gewesen, habe aber mein Besitzrecht durch meinen Sklavenaufseher Kheri ausgeübt. Mit diesem habe ich auch bis in die jüngste Zeit in schriftlichem Verkehr gestanden.

Ich bestreite die Herrenlosigkeit des in Rede stehenden Landes und bitte hierüber eventuell folgende in Ujiji ansässige Leute als Zeugen vernehmen zu wollen:

1. Munyihamissi bin Hassani
2. Salim bin Munyiheri,
3. Hasani bin Musa
4. Masud bin Hamed el Turkey.

Ich überreiche hiermit eine von mir angefertigte Skizze des von mir beanspruchten Stücks Landes und bitte in der Entschädigungsfrage um die Entscheidung des Kaiserlichen Gouvernements".

original sketch), the word *Bahari* (sea) indicates the water surface. The Luba, Uguha, and Goma regions are indicated on the west side of the map and the peninsula of Ubwari is shown as an island (Kissiwa Ubwari). Kigoma’s immediate neighbours to the South, the Tongwe, are stretched over more than 500 kilometres to the South of the lake. The Malagarasi (Mto wa Mragarazi) is the main river floating into Lake Tanganyika. *Kivukoni* means the landing bridge or the place of the ferry, probably referring to the place where the lake can most easily be crossed or where the lake is at its narrowest, i.e. between the Mahale Mountains and the “source” of the Lukuga near the town of Kalemie in the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Figure 6: Situation of place-names in the file on Gosilatembo’s land claim.

The largest part of the map deals with Kigoma-Ujiji (cf. Figure 6), and drastically enlarges the Kigoma-Gungu-Bangwe-Ujiji area. This zone covers circa one third of

the map, whereas the depicted area represents not more than 0.1 percent of the surface of the lake. Gosilatembo located Ukaranga, Ujiji, Ugoi, and the port of Ujiji (Bandarini), which were all part of the agglomeration of Ujiji. He also indicated Bangwe (Pongwe) – the district over which Mwinyi Akida was *mtwale* (local chief) – and Gungu (Gongo pa Mbogo) – the most important market under control of the Jiji in the region (in contrast to Ugoi, which was controlled by coastal traders). He marked the lands in Kigoma belonging to Akida Tayari (Kigoma pa Akida Tayari baba ya Hosilatembo) in red. By writing the word “Ujiji” in the red zone, he situated the estate at the Bay of Kigoma within Ujiji. The question remains what part of the Bay was meant.

It is clear from Gosilatembo’s sketch that he claimed the peninsula of Ruanza. The small peninsula of Ruanza is drawn disproportionately large on this map, thereby illustrating its importance for the purpose of his sketch rather than its relative size. North of the peninsula he wrote “Bandara ya Sitima”, which means steam port or port for steam ships, and this port was in the Bight of Kabondo, where the *Kronland* had been declared and where the future port would be developed. Apart from the fact that Mwinyi Akida and Gosilatembo had lived on the island/peninsula for many years,⁵⁰ the reconstruction of the land claims gives further indications that this land indeed belonged to Mwinyi Akida and later his heir.

4.3.2 Reconstructing African and German Land Claims

In the years following the 1903 correspondence, the preparations to construct the new port of Kigoma continued. The claims that Gosilatembo made from Pangani and Heri’s operations on the spot were likely to interfere with the demarcation of the port. The German positions in this case were therefore also driven by the German self-interest in developing the port. In January 1906, the new station chief in Ujiji, *Hauptmann* Wilhelm Göring,⁵¹ reached the conclusion that neither Gosilatembo nor Heri were entitled to the land, because in his understanding the Jiji

⁵⁰ The reduced lake level, mentioned earlier, had turned the island of Ruanza into a peninsula. See Hore, *Tanganyika*, 113 and 147.

⁵¹ Wilhelm Göring was the commander of the military station of Ujiji, when the Gosilatembo case was closed in 1906. He, too, would become Resident of Urundi from 1910 until his (first) retirement in 1911. During the First World War, he would be remobilised and achieve the rank of major in 1915. He was the eldest son of Ernst Heinrich Göring, who became the first imperial commissioner/colonial governor of German Southwest Africa (today Namibia). His half-brother would give their family name a worldwide notoriety a couple of decades later (Wolfgang Reith, “Die Kommandobehörde der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppen in der Heimat”, *Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch* 48/49 [2000/2001]: 228–235 and 50 [2002]: 64–73).

mwami (king or paramount chief) Lusimbi disposed of all land. The same report, however, also mentions that Gosilatembo's father Mwinyi Akida received the land directly from Lusimbi's father *mwami* Mugasa out of gratitude for his armed support in a battle against the Warundi. It remains unclear how the two statements fit together: if the *mwami* disposed of all land and gave the land directly to Mwinyi Akida, then why was his son and heir not entitled to the land?

Nonetheless, Göring concluded that the land claimed by Gosilatembo was situated more to the west in Kigoma's bay of "Niakatoa",⁵² which is outside of the *Kronland* and the projected port in Kigoma's bay of Kabondo and was apparently therefore never affected by the *Kronland* declaration. This judgement is clearly at odds with Gosilatembo's map. A paraphrasing of this reasoning could be as follows: his land is of no interest to us and it is not his land in the first place. Case closed, one would gather, but there were some loose ends, which were partly already noticed in 1906 and partly taken up again a couple of years later.

While dealing with this case, a land deed of February 1902 came to the surface, which turned out to be a falsification. *Mtwale* (local chief) Heri, who is the same person whom Gosilatembo called first his "slave" and then his "slave overseer", had sold a plot in the strategic bay of Kabondo to *Feldwebel* (sergeant) Hoffmann, the DOAG man mentioned before. The sketch of the plot, however, displayed the new road and the designated area for the landing for steamers, which did not yet exist in 1902. Hoffmann had died in Tabora in May 1905.⁵³ Göring concluded that the transaction was best undone and Heri was willing to refund the buyer or in this case his heirs. It remains unresolved who was responsible for which part of the swindle and if Heri was entitled to sell the land in the first place. Was this perhaps the transaction Gosilatembo referred to in the first place? And does it concern the same plot that was declared *Kronland* in 1903?

Six years later, on 22 May 1912, in the context of legally fixing the CASG's (*Centralafrikanische Seengesellschaft*) property title on the Kigoma peninsula, the imperial district officer (*Kaiserliche Bezirksamtman*) in Ujiji reconstructed the

52 It could not conclusively be established where the bight of "Niakatoa" is. "Nya" being a prefix indicating a location in the Ha language, "Niakatoa" could refer to Katonga, which is nowadays a hamlet on the Bangwe peninsula. Although the present-day hamlet of Katonga lies to the East of the peninsula, Göring stated that the bight lies more to the West. There is a Niakatanga mountain north of the Bight of Kabondo, but there is no bight there. The bight of "Niakatoa" probably refers to the bight between the Bight of Nyassa and Bangwe. See map.

53 Contrary to the rest of this section, the information about the time and place of Hoffmann's death is mentioned in the second case (*Kronlandsverhandlung N°2 des Militärbezirks Ujijidji*) of the record TNA, G.8/352: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Ujijidji. Bd. 1: 1902–1906.

land tenure situation.⁵⁴ The document picks up where the previous file had come to an end. This report contains an in-depth analysis of who was entitled to which plots of land in the designated area where the port of Kigoma was under construction. In particular, the land claims by the CASG seemed to be inconclusive and again based on a questionable sale by Heri. Assessing the property situation around the Bay of Kigoma, the District Officer reconstructed that Mwinyi Akida, who had settled in Kigoma at the time of *mwami* Mugasa's rule, had dispatched a troop with guns and ammunition to help Mugasa fend off a Rundi assault.⁵⁵ As a reward, so this 1912 report asserts, he explicitly (*ausdrücklich*) obtained the property rights over Bangwe and Kassio. Although he continued to live in Kigoma and virtually (*gewissermassen*) became *mtwale* (local or sub-chief) of Kigoma, he was not endowed with the land of Kigoma. After his death, his son Gosilatembo became the new *mtwale* of Kigoma. The function of *mtwale* was unquestioned, but the *mtwale* is not entitled to the land.

On top of that, there was confusion who exactly was entitled to act as *mtwale* of Kigoma. Given that Gosilatembo no longer lived in Kigoma and that Heri represented him, did that also make him *mtwale*? Heri had been captured in Congo together with his mother and was a bondsman or serf of Mwinyi Akida and Gosilatembo. When Gosilatembo "soon" returned to the coast,⁵⁶ he took Heri with him. After a while, he sent Heri back to take care of his estate. Gosilatembo initially wanted to travel back to Kigoma but, in the end, did not, probably either because of the dramatically altered political situation in East Central Africa or because of his own career on the coast. After he had granted Heri manumission, the latter behaved as *mtwale* of Kigoma, pretending to be independent from the *mwami* of Bujiji, and gathered a large cohort of Congolese around him.

It transpires from the 1912 file, that Heri had sold the Kigoma peninsula for 100 rupees to the CASG's founder and owner Otto Schloifer. Perhaps this was the transaction to which Gosilatembo reacted back in 1903. Anyhow, Heri asserted that *Hauptmann* Göring allowed the transaction and signed the receipt, although he could not present any written proof. He kept the money for himself, while he stated that he had informed Gosilatembo. The latter had purportedly told him that he should only transmit the money if the price was high but could keep it if it was only a small amount. Mwami Lusimbi, however, contested his right to sell

54 TNA, G.8/900: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 2: 1906–1916.

55 Mugasa reigned from 1862 till 1880 according to Brown, "Ujiji", 23. Mwinyi Akida is introduced in Subchapter 3.3.1.

56 This report uses the word "bald" (soon), whereas Gosilatembo wrote that he stayed in Kigoma from 1882 till 1889.

the land but dropped the case in return for 15 rupees. The transaction had neither been approved nor registered by the government which made it threefold illegal: Heri was not entitled to sell Gosilatembo's land, it was not his land, and the necessary government approval was missing. The remaining question is why Göring, who had discarded Gosilatembo's claims in 1906 and had annulled Heri's sale to Hoffmann, did nothing against this land deed, which de facto resulted in the colonial administration treating the Kigoma peninsula as the property of the CASG. Perhaps the ambiguous reputation of Hoffmann (see Subchapter 4.1.) or the fact that he was already dead when Göring annulled the sale are sufficient explanation already, but it is also worthwhile to have a closer look at Schloifer.

Otto Schloifer was the founder and managing director of the *Centralafrikanische Seengesellschaft*. In 1902, he gained the monopoly over the salt mines of Uvinza, which he rebaptized (New) Gottorp in honour of the Grand Duke of Holstein-Gottorp in Oldenburg, where he and his aristocratic wife had their roots. By then, he already had a colonial-military career behind him, including the participation in an expedition of the German *Antisklaverei-Komitee* in 1892 to 1893. By the time he left the *Schutztruppe* in 1901, he had reached the rank of *Oberleutnant*. He showed interest in all the typical colonial economic opportunities of the day ranging from portage to telegraph construction and to mining and rubber, but in the end, only his salt business would actually materialize. Big names of German colonialism such as Hermann von Wissmann, (then) Major Ludwig von Estorff, and Graf Gustav Adolf von Götzen supported him, as did Wilhelm Göring. Göring personally assisted him to choose the site of his salt factory in 1902. When a government decision in 1905 that aimed at containing the movement of people from and to Burundi and Rwanda undermined the revenue of Schloifer's business, Göring complained with the Governor. It is unclear if Göring had personal interests in Schloifer's businesses, but he was definitely supportive of his undertakings. As a matter of fact, the CASG had not only (legally or illegally) acquired the plot in Kigoma but was one of the big buyers in and around Ujiji in general. Moreover, the impact of his salt business on widespread salt winning practices and his concomitant right to levy taxes severely disrupted local markets, mobility, and labour.⁵⁷

As a solution for the questionable property claims which were, on the one hand, void but, on the other hand, granted in fact and administrative practices, the author of the report proposed to give the CASG a smaller plot on the peninsula facing south in exchange. This would allow the salt company to store and ship salt in the port of Kigoma, which was Schloifer's main concern, after all. It

57 Chrétien, "Le commerce du sel", 414; Brown, "Ujiji", 234–235.

would at the same time allow the German authorities to construct their port infrastructure as envisaged.

When we piece together the investigations by German colonial officers in the decade between 1903 and 1912, not all questions are yet answered. Even if the land sales to Hoffmann and Schloifer were probably speculative, as the two Germans definitely knew where the port would come, there must have been a minimum of credibility to Heri's property claims to turn to him for the transactions or to get the deeds recognized – ironically in one instance by Göring himself. Mwinyi Hamisi bin Mwinyi Hassani must, too, have believed that the land was Gosilatembo's, because otherwise he would not have sent a letter to Pangani in the first place. He knew the area in detail, since he was the son of the *mtwale* of Mkamba – the district right next to Ruanza, the peninsula Gosilatembo claimed as his property.

The reconstruction raises several new questions about the roles of Heri and Göring, the power relations and power holders in Bujiji, the land of the Jiji, and entitlements to land under different political orders. In fact, four different orders are entangled in this case: the Jiji order of political office and landed property, the by-then defunct order of the caravan trade complex in which Mwinyi Akida had operated, the colonial order attempting to impose *Kronland* legislation and to construct port and transportation infrastructure, and the emergent local order of a "Congolese" urban population supporting the position of Heri. Sorting out the relations between these four angles is tantamount to grasping the transformation from the nineteenth century to the colonial period.

4.3.3 Land Tenure and Politics in Bujiji

The problem of assessing the property claims by Gosilatembo is twofold. On the one hand, the German administration tried to find out exactly where Mwinyi Akida's and, hence, Gosilatembo's property was situated. The sketch by the latter had the same purpose. On the other hand, different political orders and, hence, different property regimes overlapped when trying to reconstruct the legitimacy of land claims. This ambivalence affected not only an old exile rooted in the defeated caravan trade complex like Gosilatembo but, as we have seen, also the likes of Hoffmann and Schloifer.

The "traditional" Jiji political order was explained in the previous chapter. Even though Gosilatembo seems to have inherited the *mtwale* chieftainship of his father, being *mtwale* of a certain district did not result in an entitlement over the land. Even the *mwami* did not have the ultimate say over land. Hence, Göring's conclusion that only *mwami* Lusimbi was entitled to the land that Gosilatembo

considered his property was not in line with the precolonial, so-called "traditional", land tenure regime in Ujiji.⁵⁸ The *Bezirksamtmann* in 1912 was aware of the prerogatives of the *mtwale* but nevertheless overestimated the presupposed absolute power of the *mwami*. He wrote:

As an expression of his gratitude, Mgassa expressly gave him [Mwinyi Akida] the small landscapes of Bangwe and Kassio as property [!]. Muniakida stayed in Kigoma and became the Mtuale of Kigoma. However, there was no explicit gift of Kigoma; and according to the law of the land, the Mtuale is not the owner of the land, but the Sultan, under whom he stands.⁵⁹

In fact, it was rather the other way around. Mwinyi Akida had been declared *mtwale* (chief) of Bangwe,⁶⁰ which did not make him proprietor of the land. We do not know whether he de facto – without formal designation – acted as *mtwale* of Kigoma, as well. But we know that his estate was in Kigoma. Hore visited him in 1878 in his dwellings on the island of Ruanza, in the Bay of Kigoma between the Bight of Kabondo and the Bight of Nyassa.⁶¹ This happens to be the exact location where the port of Kigoma has been built at the beginning of the twentieth century. This still does not answer either the question if he actually owned that land nor whether this private ownership could be inherited. More than a century later, we will still not be able to provide a definite answer to these questions. However, I have demonstrated that the criteria used by the German administration to address this question were not in line with the "traditional" law (*Landesrecht*), which they pretended to respect. In fact, and not surprisingly, they primarily followed the German law.

The German land law in East Africa was based on a threefold principle: land possessed by chiefs or African communities stayed in their hands, land already in private ownership in 1896 stayed in private ownership, and all unowned (*herrenlos*) land was *Kronland* under the control of the government. The possibility of acquiring land was limited and under the control of the government. The government could

58 TNA G.8/352: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 1: 1902–1906.

59 German original: "Zum Dank gab ihm [Mwinyi Akida] Mgassa ausdrücklich die kleinen Landschaften Bangwe und Kassio zu Eigentum [!]. Muniakida blieb in Kigoma wohnen und wurde gewissermassen Mtuale von Kigoma. Eine ausdrückliche Beschenkung mit Kigoma fand jedoch nicht statt; und der Mtuale ist nach dem Landesrecht nicht Eigentümer des Landes, sondern der Sultan, unter dem er steht" (TNA G.8/900: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 2: 1906–1916).

60 Hore, *Tanganyika*, 83.

61 Hore, *Tanganyika*, 82.

also expropriate land in the public interest or in the interest of the natives.⁶² The problem with these principles is the difficulty to prove possession prior to colonization and, hence, also the possibility to acquire land from self-proclaimed private owners or from chiefs, who either claimed landed property or were presumed to have the right to the land. This was what happened both when Germans assumed that all land derived from the *mwami* and when Hoffmann or Schloifer purchased land from Heri in the future port area. Sometimes, it was in the interest of (some) German officials to derive authenticity from land claims and, sometimes, to contest these claims. The claims by Heri and Gosilatembo are a clear example of this: Hoffmann's land deed was authenticated by Heri's property claim but was annulled after a couple of years; Gosilatembo's claim, which was probably the most solid one, was refuted; and Schloifer's purchase, also authenticated by Heri, persisted and was, at least to some extent, acknowledged by the administration.

When we have a closer look at Gosilatembo's case, von Grawert's remark that the land at the harbour foreshore, which was declared *Kronland* in 1903, laid fallow was in fact substantiating the unowned status of the land and hence the legal basis to declare it *Kronland*. In his answer of 5 December 1903 – assisted, to an unknown extent, by Dr. Neuhaus –, Gosilatembo included several points that must be read against the background of the German East African land legislation. He primarily contradicted the "*Herrenlosigkeit*" of his claimed private property by referring to buildings, mango trees, and enslaved people on the land, which should prove that the land was taken care of, as well as by indicating that he continued to follow up on his property through his custodian Heri until very recently. He called for an intervention by the government and suggested four witnesses to substantiate his claims. The second letter is composed much more as a statement preparing for a legal procedure than the first. We should remember that Gosilatembo did not oppose the sale or the expropriation as such but wanted a fair price either by selling his land to the government or by getting a cash compensation in case of an expropriation. The fact that he listed the number of huts and the presence of fruit trees reads like a preparation for a compensation claim, because these are the type of immobile goods eligible for payment of damages.⁶³ We do not know if he was in the end compensated in any way. But in all likelihood based on the traces of arguments found in the sources, his ownership was discarded on shaky grounds and this probably meant that his financial claims were rejected. After all, he came from an old regime that had lost its direct relevance in the context of Kigoma-Ujiji.

⁶² Iliffe, *Tanganyika*, 127.

⁶³ Wilhelm Methner quoted in Iliffe, *Tanganyika*, 128.

4.3.4 Two Men, both called Heri?

It is useful to reconstruct the entanglement of different orders by more closely identifying the main characters of this story. The protagonist in this story is undoubtedly the formerly enslaved man and acting sub-chief Heri. The antagonist, who entered the scene first, is Gosilatembo, the son of Mwinyi Akida, who was a member of the Pangani triumvirate in the second half of the nineteenth century. I start with the latter.

Gosilatembo, son of Mwinyi Akida bin Tayari

We know comparatively little about Gosilatembo, which may have something to do with some particularities of archival sources. First of all, the above mentioned file G8/352 in the German Records of the Tanzania National Archives uses four different orthographies for his name: Gosilatembo, Hosilatembo, Gesilatembo, and Gasilatembo.⁶⁴ An interlinear remark added to the 1912 report by the *Bezirksamtmann* suggests that the name Gosilatembo could be read as “Ngozi ya Tembo”, which means elephant skin or thick skin.⁶⁵ Thomas John Biginagwa refers to the nineteenth-century slave dealer “known locally as Gosi la Tembo” from Bweni near Pangani and translates the name as old male elephant.⁶⁶ Hence, the spelling of the name is unclear and it is likely that it is in fact a Swahili nickname. In other words, that Gosilatembo might have been known under yet another name. British colonial officials Grant and Bagenal stated that the son and heir of Mwinyi Akida was Mwinyi Heri. The Heri who stayed in and around Kigoma afterwards was “not a son but a freed slave of Mwinyiheri”.⁶⁷ This could be a mix-up confusing the legacy of Mwinyi Akida Tayari with Mwinyi Heri bin Mwinyi Mkuu el-Ghaskani, the above-mentioned coastal leader of Ujiji. But more likely, it means that Gosilatembo was officially named Heri (*Mwinyi* being a title of honour, comparable to Sir in English). Brown also stated that Mwinyi Akida’s “son, Heri, was proclaimed his successor [as *mtwale*] by the Bujiji umwami”.⁶⁸ In her interpretation, the contestation by Gosilatembo in 1903 was directed against this Heri, implicitly assuming that there was

64 TNA, G.8/352: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 1: 1902–1906.

65 TNA, G.8/900: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 2: 1906–1916.

66 Thomas J. Biginagwa, “Historical Archaeology of the 19th-Century Caravan Trade In North-Eastern Tanzania: A Zooarchaeological Perspective”, PhD dissertation, University of York - Department of Archaeology, 2012, 108.

67 TNA, Kigoma District Book, Vol. III: Tribal History and Legends: Mjiji Tribe, sheet 2.

68 Brown, “Ujiji”, 175.

only one Heri who was the son of Mwinyi Akida and had inherited his estate and his position of *mtwale*.⁶⁹ However, it could very well be that there were two men called Heri: the son Mwinyi Heri, aka Gosilatembo, and Heri the “slave”, who managed to turn the name confusion to his advantage and got accepted by the Germans as *mtwale* over the area of Kigoma and Bangwe. Given that von Grawert had never heard of Gosilatembo, this scenario is not unlikely.

Secondly, archival sources containing information about individual people in the proto-colonial and early colonial period tend to be sparse, except around moments of crisis, conflict or litigation. Knowing that despite his key arbitrating role in-between Jiji authorities and Ujiji’s Swahili-Arab townsfolk, even Mwinyi Akida bin Tayari is largely ignored in European accounts, it is not at all surprising that his son is even less present in the sources. When he does appear, it is indeed in the context of a legal action – in this case, about landed property. However, the typical scarcity of sources is not only place-bound (in or out of Ujiji town, for instance), person-bound (focusing on the alpha men), and case-bound (conflict or litigation) but also determined by time. On the one hand, there is the impact of the available time for observation, as we see in the case of Hore. On the other hand, there are certain times in history when a heightened level of attention leads to more detailed information.

In the case of Kigoma-Ujiji and of the Arab-Swahili traders in East Central Africa, in general, this heightened attention occurred when European colonizers violently clashed with their “Arab” rivals under the humanitarian guise of an anti-slavery campaign. We know in quite some detail who was involved in this war of conquest, on either side of the hostilities.⁷⁰ But by the time this war broke out, Mwinyi Akida was already dead, and by the time it reached its peak, Gosilatembo had already returned to the coast.

In the case of Pangani on the coast, the height of European – and in particular German – attention in the late-nineteenth century coincided with the so-called Abushiri uprising in 1888 to 1890. Abushiri bin Salim al-Harthi, who was of mixed Arab-African (Omani-Oromo) descent, initiated the uprising but was soon joined by many of the coastal communities engaged in the caravan trade and the plantation economy all along the coast between Lindi and Tanga. Here as well, the reconstruction of all actors involved has been carried out in a rather meticulous way both by officials at the time and subsequently by scholars.⁷¹ But

⁶⁹ Brown, “Ujiji”, 175 n25.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, Bennett, *Arab Versus European*.

⁷¹ See, for instance, Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*.

our Gosilatembo only arrived back in Pangani when the uprising had already been smashed.

Thus, for a variety of reasons, Gosilatembo is hard to get hold of. Nevertheless, we do know something about him. First of all, we know his father and the origin of his land holdings. Based on his own letters, we know that he lived on the coast for most of his life, he spent seven years in Kigoma-Ujiji between 1882 and 1889, and he was still in touch with the sons of his father's companions in 1903. In the same file, the German administration gave some background information including the fact that Gosilatembo had been appointed *jumbe* or local chief in Bweni, a district of Pangani in 1893.⁷² Finally, we know from the research by Biginagwa and Paul J. Lane that there is a nineteenth-century building at Bweni popularly known as Gosi la Tembo's dwelling. "Oral traditions recorded in Pangani town repeatedly mention a notorious slave dealer known locally as Gosi la Tembo [old male elephant] who based his activities at Bweni, on the shore opposite Pangani town".⁷³ This is the region of origin of the coastal triumvirate: "Mwinyi Heri and Mwinyi Akida were born in Pangani, and Mwinyi Hassani lived originally in the nearby town of Mbweni".⁷⁴

Heri: From Congolese slave to chief of Kigoma

Whereas Gosilatembo was a descendant of a local leader from lost times, who neither lived in Kigoma-Ujiji nor had any of the local power his father once had, Heri belonged to Kigoma-Ujiji's by now dominant population group, who had come from the lands west of the lake. Moreover, he was an early arrival with close ties to the coastal leaders of those days and he operated from Kigoma, not Ujiji. It is worthwhile to piece together what we know about him.

Many clues point in the direction that Heri was an imposter. However, it would be too easy to take this observation as a conclusion rather than as a starting point. It would not explain why he was entrusted with the custody of Gosilatembo's estate, how he managed to gather followers, how he could proceed with land transactions for many years, and why he continued to be recognized as *jumbe* (local chief) of Kigoma (later Mwanga) under three consecutive colonial

72 TNA, G.8/352: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 1: 1902–1906.

73 Paul J. Lane, "Slavery and slave trading in eastern Africa: exploring the intersections of historical sources and archaeological evidence" in *Slavery in Africa: Archaeology and Memory: Proceedings of the British Academy*, (eds.) Paul J. Lane and Kevin C. MacDonald (London, Oxford University Press, 2011), 292. Reference in: Biginagwa, "Historical Archaeology", 108.

74 Brown, "Ujiji", 128 n2.

governments. For each of these deeds, there was always another party involved who must have believed in or benefited from the imposture.

Heri started to take care of Mwinyi Akida's and Gosilatembo's legacy, when the latter left for Pangani in 1889. He retired as *jumbe* of Mwanga, the African quarter of the town of Kigoma, half a century later in 1939. The British colonial sources call him Heri *bin* (son of) Akida and underscore that he served four governments, which would also include the Jiji authorities beside the German (until 1916), Belgian (1916–1921), and British (from 1921 onwards) colonial rulers.⁷⁵ Apparently, he de facto continued to hold the reins after his replacement in 1939 until his death two years later. Moreover, he was formally succeeded by his oldest son Hussain in 1939. After his death, Hussein was installed as *akida* (regional chief) in Mpanda, a town around 250 kilometres southeast of Kigoma, and the younger son Masudi succeeded his late father as *jumbe* of Mwanga. Both Hussein and Masudi were soon deposed because of incompetence, but at least at first the confidence in Heri was so high that his sons inherited his legitimacy as a leader.⁷⁶

We have already reconstructed the initial misunderstanding of considering Heri as Mwinyi Akida's son. Most likely Mwinyi Akida's son, whom we know as Gosilatembo, was also called Heri. It is very likely that the Jiji authorities did not make a mistake when the Jiji *mwami* proclaimed Heri bin Akida as his father's successor in the function of *mtwale*. They probably meant Gosilatembo. However, when the manumitted Heri was entrusted with the custody of Gosilatembo's estate in Kigoma and hence acted as the de facto holder of Akida's legacy, one can quite easily understand that newly arriving German military administrators confused the real Heri bin Akida, whom they had never seen nor heard of, with another Heri who in all appearance acted as the heir of Mwinyi Akida. No matter how easy it is to understand the confusion, it is remarkable that the mix-up persisted. Documents were produced in 1903 (the letters by Gosilatembo), 1912 (the report by the *Bezirksamtmann*), and 1929 (the tribal history by Grant and Bagenal) indicating with disbelief that the acting *mtwale* Heri was in fact a formerly enslaved servant of Mwinyi Heri bin Mwinyi Akida aka Gosilatembo. Still, the colonial authorities continued to call this formerly enslaved person coming from what by then had become Congo, *mtwale* or *jumbe* Heri bin Akida.

On closer inspection, it is not surprising that Heri stayed *mtwale* despite his dubious land transactions and misleading genealogy. As a matter of fact, a lot had changed since Mwinyi Akida had died and Gosilatembo had left, and by the turn

⁷⁵ TNA, 63.723: Luichi Federation: Kigoma District 1921–1945.

⁷⁶ McHenry, "Reorganization," p. 69; TNA, Kigoma Regional Office (180), A2/3: African Administration & Affairs: Administration Ujiji & Mwanga & Mwandiga 1933–1954: Letter from District Commissioner Kigoma to Provincial Commissioner Western Province 11 May 1944.

of the century it was in everybody's interest to have Heri in the position of liaison officeholder between all relevant communities in and around town.

Heri was the formerly enslaved servant of a respected leader of the coastal merchant community and had over the years built good relations with the Jiji authorities. Even if he was not Mwinyi Akida's son, he had gained the confidence to be entrusted with the custody over the estate. We should not be misled by a too stereotypical understanding of the word "slave". As Hore already observed around 1880, there is no clear correlation between one's status as enslaved or free and their wealth and standing.⁷⁷ Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapter, there existed a hierarchy and social mobility amongst the retinue of the caravans trade complex, whereby some enslaved people grew up as part of the household of their masters, could become economically successful, gain freedom and access to important political positions, and still remain obliged to the (former) master-turned-patron.⁷⁸ Given the responsibility and confidence entrusted upon Heri by Gosilatembo, he must have been an enslaved person of high standing and many talents. We know that Heri had been captured in Congo together with his mother.⁷⁹ It is not unlikely that he had already become part of Mwinyi Akida's household as a child. He allegedly sold chickens and eggs to Livingstone as an eight- or nine-year-old when the missionary doctor was in Ujiji around 1868/69.⁸⁰ As such, despite being an enslaved person rather than a son, he was deeply rooted in the place and embodied continuity with decades of relations and mutual trust between the coastal pioneers and the Jiji authorities.

On top of that, it also matters that he was of Congolese origin. At the height of the caravan trade complex in East Central Africa in the 1870s and 1880s, Ujiji had seen the arrival of people from Manyema as well as from around the northern part of Lake Tanganyika. When the caravan trade complex collapsed after the military defeat in the 1890s, even more immigrants or refugees from across the lake arrived in Ujiji town and region.⁸¹ Although there was a huge diversity

⁷⁷ Hore, *Tanganyika*, 73–74.

⁷⁸ Nimtz, *Islam and Politics*; Glassman, "The Bondsman's New Clothes"; Gooding, "Slavery, 'Respectability'".

⁷⁹ TNA, G.8/900: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 2: 1906–1916.

⁸⁰ J. Rooke Johnston, "Bits & Pieces, or Seven years in the Western Province of Tanganyika Territory 1933–1940", 23, in Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Oxford University (BLCAS), MSS. Afr. s. 1935 (1): John Rooke Johnston: Reminiscences of Colonial Service: Tanganyika, 1921–1948.

⁸¹ Brown, "Ujiji", 34–37, 98–104 and 226–233.

among these many “Congolese” who had – taken together – little in common except a post factum colonial state formation when they had already left, the “Congolese” factor had a strong impact on the demographic and power relations in Ujiji and Kigoma. The statement that Heri managed to gather a large cohort of Congolese around him⁸² should be understood against this background. Hence, Heri embodied not only continuity but also the dramatic political and demographic change of the final decade of the nineteenth century.

It was, obviously, in the interest of the Jiji authorities and the colonial governments to espouse continuity and give room to change at the same time. I am tempted to believe, however, that Heri’s inventiveness in serving private interests – including his own – also helped to keep him acceptable as a local authority. His accommodating attitude to arrange deals with German military entrepreneurs like Schloifer and Hoffmann may have been disclosed as fraud in some of the records. However, in the first place, it had given an air of authenticity to their land acquisitions, which at least in the case of the well-connected Schloifer had been administratively sanctioned by colonial officers like Göring.

Under German, Belgian, and British rulers, the town of Kigoma was gradually developed as the European part of town. Sleeping sickness campaigns were used as a motivation to regroup the population. The quarter Mwanga became the African village of Kigoma and Heri became its first headman. He stayed in that position until the age of approximately 80. By the late 1930s, he began to lose some of his astuteness, as becomes clear in an observation by John Rooke Johnston, who was District Officer in Kigoma between 1934 and 1940. Acting as an assessor in a court case, *jumbe* Heri apparently became drowsy and fell asleep and when he woke up he theatrically accused the witness.⁸³ This kind of behaviour may have been one of the reasons why he was eventually replaced in 1939.

However, by then, he had already lived a memorable life. In the end, Rooke Johnston has perhaps written the most telling portrayal of the man both hitting the nail on the head and consequently maintaining the mystery that hung around him. After having helped to put out a fire in Mwanga village at the end of the dry season in 1935, Rooke Johnston writes: “During the fire the headman’s house was caught and, while burning, out of it came young crocodiles, iguanas, leopards and other curious animals. The headman was Jumbe Kheri, a Manyema, obviously a wizard and a very old man”.⁸⁴

82 TNA, G.8/900: Anträge auf Überlassung von Kronland, Kronlandserklärungen, Verpachtung und Verkauf von Kronland, Bez. Udjidji. Bd. 2: 1906–1916.

83 Rooke Johnston, “Bits & Pieces” (BLCAS, MSS. Afr. s. 1935 (1)), 23.

84 Rooke Johnston, “Bits & Pieces” (BLCAS, MSS. Afr. s. 1935 (1)), 23.

This very old Manyema wizard embodied the transformations from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, from the first stages of urbanization to colonization and to the eve of the Second World War. His life trajectory, moreover, evokes the connections with the caravan trade complex from coast to Congo, with Jiji authorities, with the spatial reorganization of the urban area, and with the port of Kigoma, which lays at the heart of the next chapter.