

**A TRIANGULATION OF RELATIONSHIPS:  
GODFREY WILSON, ZACHARIA MAWERE AND THEIR BEMBA INFORMANTS  
IN BROKEN HILL, NORTHERN RHODESIA, 1938–1941**

A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in History, in the Department of History, University of the Western Cape.



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Submitted: May, 2015

## **Key Words**

Godfrey Wilson

Bemba

Broken Hill Mine (Kabwe)

Bemba life histories

Anthropological fieldwork style

Micro-politics of knowledge production

Biography

Informant

Assistant

Northern Rhodesia (Zambia)



I, Mary Mbewe, declare that '*A Triangulation of Relationships: Godfrey Wilson, Zacharia Mawere and Their Bemba Informants in Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia, 1938–1941*' is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Mary Mbewe

Signed..... May 2015



## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank the Centre for Humanities Research in Africa, of the University of the Western Cape, for financial support for the entire duration of my MA programme and for providing an invigorating intellectual home during the past three years.

Thanks are also due to my employers, the National Museums Board of Zambia, for granting me study leave.

My sincerest gratitude to my supervisor Professor Andrew Bank, who guided me through the research and writing of this thesis and whose consistent faith in me, even when I did not deserve it, has helped me to grow intellectually .

My sincerest gratitude to all the lecturers in the History Department for their various contributions to my pursuit of knowledge during the past three years. Heartfelt gratitude to Professors Ciraj Rassool, Leslie Witz, Patricia Hayes and Uma Duphelia-Mesthrie.

I thank the staff at the History Department and the Centre for Humanities Research for their kindness and help. Deepest gratitude to Lameez Lalkhen, Jane Smidt and Janine Brandt, I will never forget your kindness.

I did my research at the African Studies Library of the University of Cape Town. The staff there was extremely helpful and patient. I cannot thank them enough for having made my research smoother.

I also wish to thank colleagues at Moto Moto Museum for their support during the past three years and for carrying on the work of my section while I have been away. Thank you Victoria Phiri Chitungu, Chisengo Phiri, Agatha Ntenda, Stephen Mwila, Peter Chitungu, Wilfred Chiboola and John Mukupa.

Special thanks to my dearest friends at UWC, Mwayi Lusaka, Luvuyo Ndzuzo and George Agbo. I could not have asked for better friends.

Sincerest gratitude to my brothers and sisters Mailes, David, Chaku, Diana, Zumani, Joe, Gade and Elina for your support and encouragement.

In a special way, I thank my husband Reuben Mazimba for his always being there for me and for his constant encouragement.



I thank the three corners of my heart, my children Masela, Kutemwa and Chimwemwe, for enduring my long absences from home, for always welcoming me back with hugs and love.

Special thanks to my parents, for their love, for the endless and innumerable sacrifices they have made on my behalf, including looking after my children while I have been studying.

There is no end to the demands I make on them and they have unfailingly been there for me.

With unfathomable love and gratitude, it is to my parents **Naphtary Zumani Mbewe** and **Mary Elina Chirwa** that I dedicate this thesis.

## **Abstract**

The rich corpus of postcolonial scholarly engagement on indigenous intermediaries, interpreters, clerks and assistants has made a strong argument for the active participation of African agents in social scientific knowledge production on Africa. This literature has highlighted the complex and negotiated nature of fieldwork in African anthropology. While this literature has begun to deepen our understanding of the knowledge work of anthropologists and their research assistants, it has not adequately explored the relationship between anthropologists and informants in what one scholar has recently called ‘a triangulation of relationships’ between the anthropologist, the assistant and the informant. This research project proposes to explore these relationships in a detailed case study: that of the British anthropologist Godfrey Wilson (1908–1944), his interpreter Zachariah Mawere, and three primary informants, during three years of pioneering research into the effects of migrant labour at Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) between 1938 and 1941. Using a close textual reading and detailed analysis of Wilsons Bemba and English fieldnotes held in the Godfrey and Monica Wilson collection at the University of Cape Town’s African Studies Library, the study will apply a micro-historical and biographical approach. It will seek to reconstruct the biographies and anthropological contributions of one interpreter and three central Bemba informants in order to explore the micro-politics of knowledge production in African anthropology.

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## INTRODUCTION

I first heard about the Monica and Godfrey Wilson Collection in 2013 through Andrew Bank, who at that time was in contact with two researchers, both working on Godfrey Wilson's papers of his Broken Hill research in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) between 1938 and 1941. The two researchers, Jennifer Chansa, a Zambian postgraduate student from Basel University, and Karen Tranberg Hansen a senior scholar, reported a rich body of nearly untouched fieldnotes which had exceptionally detailed biographical records of Godfrey's African informants at Broken Hill. The possibility of 'discovering' the identities of Godfrey's assistant and informants and telling their stories as well as recovering their agency in knowledge production offered an opportunity for my own social history project. The fact that I am Zambian and therefore felt a sense of kinship with these informants, as well as the fact that I could read Bemba, a local Zambian language that Godfrey used at Broken Hill and in which a significant portion of the fieldnotes were written, added to this sense of mission.<sup>1</sup> Naïve as this formulation sounds in retrospect, this work of recovery, firstly of the identities of these African informants, and of their agency at the site of knowledge production, through an analysis of their relationship with the anthropologist and their centrality to his research was and is the aim of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> Bemba, alternatively known as Chibemba and Wemba, is a Bantu language that has its origins in the Katanga region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is the most widely spoken language in the urban centres of Zambia, especially on the Copperbelt, and is a lingua franca for most of Northern and North Eastern Zambia. See <http://www.ethnologue.com/17/language/bem/>, accessed 3 March 2015.



Although not as well-known as his wife, the famous South African-born anthropologist Monica Hunter Wilson (1908–1982), Godfrey Wilson (1908–1944) has been acknowledged for pioneering urban social anthropology in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia since 1964). In 1938 Godfrey was appointed as the first director of the Rhodes -Livingstone Institute (hereafter RLI) the first anthropological research institute in Africa.<sup>2</sup> In this capacity, from 1938 to 1940, he did research in Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia, at that time an emerging mining town and industrial hub, second only to towns on the Copperbelt. His research focused on social change on African societies resulting from the introduction of a capitalist economy, mostly as a consequence of the development of mining in Northern Rhodesia. He examined how these developments affected the social structures of African societies, particularly in the emerging cities. Using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Godfrey's research was largely a theoretical elaboration of the effects and scale of social change of European colonialism and global capitalism on a pre-capitalist society. His findings were published in a two-part *Essay on the Economics of Detribalisation in Northern Rhodesia* (hereafter *Essay*) in 1941 and 1942 respectively.<sup>3</sup> Godfrey argued that capitalism, unequal labour relations between Africans and Europeans, and the permanent urbanisation of African labourers led to African impoverishment. This went against the official colonial policies and mining companies' interests. Combined with unease at Godfrey's participant observation methods in

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<sup>2</sup> The RLI was the first anthropological and social research institute in Central Africa. It was established in 1938 by the colonial government in Northern Rhodesia and financed by the colonial government as well as the mining companies in the territory. It also drew financial support from other territories in the region. The RLI is now the University of Zambia's Institute of Social Research. For a detailed history of the RLI see for example Lyn Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham IN and London: Duke University Press, 2001), M. C. Musambachime, 'The University of Zambia's Institute for African studies and Social Science Research in Colonial Africa, 1938–1988' in *History in Africa*, 20 (1993), 237–48. See also G. Wilson, 'Anthropology as a Public Service' in *Africa: Journal of International African Institute*, 13, 1 (Jan 1940), 43–5.

<sup>3</sup> G. Wilson, *An Essay on the Economics of Detribalisation in Northern Rhodesia*, Parts I and II, *Rhodes-Livingstone Papers* 5 and 6 (1941 and 1942) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968); M. Wilson, 'The First Three Years, 1938–41' in *African Social Research*, 24 (December 1977); and R. Brown, 'Passages in the Life of a White Anthropologist: Max Gluckman in Northern Rhodesia' in *Journal of African History*, 20, 4 (1979), 525–41.

a highly racialised society, it earned Godfrey the antagonism of the colonial administration and mining companies, leading to the termination of his permission to do research in the Broken Hill Mine and town compounds, and his subsequent resignation in April 1940.<sup>4</sup> Godfrey's work in Broken Hill and for the RLI effectively ushered in a new era of urban social research in Zambia, one that has had a significant bearing on Zambian historiography.<sup>5</sup>

While many scholars including Lyn Schumaker, Richard Brown, Hugh Macmillan and James Fergusson had written about Godfrey's work before, they had done so without the benefit of the 'raw' data of Wilson's fieldwork.<sup>6</sup> The donation of the Wilson Papers to the University of Cape Town's Archives and Manuscripts Division in the mid-1990s has made it possible, for the first time, to gain insights into Godfrey's work and research methodologies that we cannot get from his published texts. In the introduction to the edited collection *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters*, Andrew Bank, has referred to Godfrey Wilson's fieldwork diaries and other materials from his Broken Hill research as an 'almost entirely untouched treasure trove'.<sup>7</sup> This is certainly the case. Firstly, this is because the initial interest in this archive has been focused on Monica's half-century rich anthropological

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<sup>4</sup> M. Wilson, 'The First Three Years, 1938 – 41', see also University of Cape Town Libraries, Archives and Manuscript Division, BC880 Monica and Godfrey Wilson Papers (hereafter BC880), E12.1, Director's report on the work of the first three years, 1938–40; see also Richard Brown, 'Anthropology and Colonial Rule: The Case of Godfrey Wilson and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Northern Rhodesia' in Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (New York: Humanity, 1973), 173–97.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Jan-Bart Gewald, 'Researching and Writing in the Twilight of an Imagined Conquest: Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia 1930–1960' in *History and Anthropology*, 18, 4 (2007), 7–8; James Fergusson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (London: University of California Press, 1999); Hugh Macmillan, 'The Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt: Another View' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 4 (1993), 681–712; James Fergusson, 'Global Disconnect: Abjection and the Aftermath of Modernism' in P. Geschiere, B. Meyer and P. Pels, eds., *Readings in Modernity* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 8–17; and Jennifer C. Chansa, 'The "Urbanization" of Colonial Mine Labour in Zambia: An Analysis of the Godfrey Wilson Papers on Broken Hill Mine (1938–1941)' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Basel, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*; Fergusson, *Expectations of Modernity*; Macmillan, 'Historiography of Transition'; and Brown, 'Anthropology and Colonial Rule'.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Bank, 'Introduction' in Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters* (New York: Cambridge University Press in association with the International Africa Institute, 2013), 31.

career. Most significantly, however, is the fact that a huge part of Godfrey's field notes are recorded in the local Bemba language, Godfrey's language of transaction during his research, making it impossible for non-Bemba-speaking researchers to engage adequately with these materials. As a native speaker of Bemba, I am uniquely positioned to engage with the Bemba text in this archive.

Despite the fact that initial interest in this archive has been on Monica Wilson's life and richly productive anthropological career, there are recent indications that the extent of Godfrey Wilson's contribution to African anthropology is also beginning to be more fully appreciated. Indeed, there are no fewer than four scholars who have written recently about Godfrey Wilson's anthropological research, each with a slightly different emphasis. The anthropologist Rebecca Marsland has discussed the continuities between Godfrey Wilson's 'immersed' research style in his rural studies in Bunyakyusa and urban research at Broken Hill. Marsland argues that the souring of his relations with compound managers and the colonial government in Northern Rhodesia was the direct result of an 'intimacy' with African informants that dated back to his Bunyakyusa years.<sup>8</sup> He had a 'personal fieldwork style', one that 'leaned heavily on taking part in masculine pursuits with Nyakyusa [and later Bemba] men, sharing food, attending beer parties, hunting, and discussing women.'<sup>9</sup> Marsland's emphasis on the role of masculinity in Godfrey's research is highly suggestive and informs my approach in reading the interactions between Godfrey, his research assistant and his informants at Broken Hill. While Marsland engaged significantly with Godfrey's Kinyakyusa notebooks, she did not consult his Broken Hill materials.

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<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Marsland, "'Fraternising with Africans': Godfrey Wilson and Masculine "Good Company" in 1930s Bunyakyusa' (unpublished seminar paper presented to the Royal Anthropological Institute Seminar, June 2013), 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

The second Godfrey Wilson scholar, the historian Sean Morrow, is completing a full biography of Monica Wilson, which features extensive new information about Godfrey. In an unpublished paper of one of his chapters, Morrow has documented the extent of intimacy in the field between the Wilsons as an anthropological couple, and their joint intellectual work on *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), which drew partly on Godfrey's Broken Hill materials.<sup>10</sup>

Jennifer Chansa, a Zambian student at the University of Basel, recently completed a Master's thesis on the history of the Broken Hill mine as seen through Godfrey Wilson's ethnographic eye.<sup>11</sup> Chansa's thesis provides an in-depth study of the emergence of migrant labour and the history of urbanisation in Zambia through a study of Godfrey's work and subsequent urban anthropological studies in Zambia. Her focus on Broken Hill is a significant contribution to Zambian migrant labour historiography, considering that most studies in this area have dwelt on the Copperbelt. Chansa is the only other Bemba-speaking researcher to engage with the Wilson collection. However, her thesis did not engage with issues of knowledge production between Godfrey, his research assistant and African informants, or with the biographic data that Godfrey collected.

Finally and most useful for my project, Karen Tranberg Hansen has examined Godfrey's conclusions in the *Essay* in light of his field site experiences as revealed in the fieldnotes. Hansen invites us to view Godfrey's work 'as a pioneering study of consumption, undertaken at a time when that subject had not attracted anthropological attention as a research concern

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<sup>10</sup> Sean Morrow, "'This Is From the Firm': The Anthropological Partnership of Monica and Godfrey Wilson' (unpublished paper presented at the Monica Hunter Wilson Centenary Conference, Hogsback, 24–26 June 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Chansa, "'Urbanization" of Colonial Migrant Labour in Zambia'.

in its own right.<sup>12</sup> As Hansen and others have observed, a major strength of Godfrey's theoretical explanation in the *Essay* is the extent to which Godfrey analysed social and economic changes in Northern Rhodesia within the framework of the world economy, an analysis in advance of his time. Through detailed analysis of the English text fieldnotes, Hansen has drawn attention to the depth of Godfrey's collaborative research and the closeness of his relations with his informants, highlighting in particular the role played by Zacharia Mawere, Godfrey's research assistant at Broken Hill.

While most of the above research has drawn attention to the significance of Godfrey's research at Broken Hill highlighting his seminal contribution to urban social anthropology in Zambia, save for Hansen's work none has adequately engaged with how in fact Godfrey did his research. Hansen has analysed aspects of Godfrey's methodology noting the use of biographic sketches in his research and highlighting Zacharia Mawere's research assistance.<sup>13</sup> However, she describes her account as 'provisional' given that she was unable to engage with the Bemba texts in the archive which contain most of the detailed conversations between Godfrey and his informants, and where the majority of the informants' biographical details are recorded.

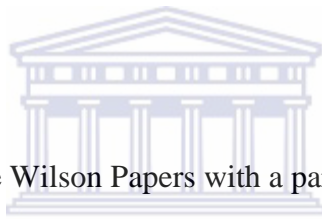
This research draws on these texts as well as the English text. The aim of this mini-thesis is to analyse the micro-politics of knowledge production between the anthropologist Godfrey Wilson, his research assistant and three key informants in Northern Rhodesia between 1938

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<sup>12</sup> Karen Tranberg Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting: Godfrey Wilson in Broken Hill 1938–41' (unpublished paper (2015)), 32.

<sup>13</sup> Godfrey in his notebooks used the terms 'biographic sketch' and 'life-history' synonymously. I find that while too narrow a definition, 'biographic sketch' best describes the biographical details in the archive, which are limited in some ways in that they dwell on specific aspects that were central to Godfrey's research. Hence, while dwelling on the subjects' working lives and history, there is very little in the way of personal backgrounds of informants except when those details are relevant to the research project. The exception in some ways is Xavier Kofie, whose life history is the subject of Chapter Two of this thesis.

and 1941.<sup>14</sup> I attempt to reconstruct the identities and life histories of these African interpreters as stories in their own right, given the centrality of their role in the knowledge project as well as the significance of their life stories as emblematic of experiences of Africans in Northern Rhodesia at a particular point in history. Among other things the project therefore aims to contribute to an emerging body of work that provides a fuller recognition of Godfrey Wilson's contribution as an African anthropologist, and explore the micro-politics of knowledge production in the field between an anthropologist, his main interpreter/assistant Zacharia Mawere and three primary African informants in a given case study, to present a fuller case for the agency of Bemba informants through extended and detailed life histories and to deepen our understanding of the complexities of the cross-cultural encounters in the social sciences in Africa.



I use a close textual reading of the Wilson Papers with a particular focus on Godfrey Wilson's notebooks, field diaries and letters during the time of his work at Broken Hill mine.<sup>15</sup> This research was conducted in the University of Cape Town's African Studies Library, for several months between March 2014 and May 2015.

I brought knowledge and techniques from literature on archives, translation and the raw texts of anthropology to bear on my reading of the archive.<sup>16</sup> I therefore approached Godfrey's

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<sup>14</sup> Taking the assertion that knowledge is produced within specific relations of power that are socio-culturally mediated, this thesis thus engages with the concept of a 'micro-politics of knowledge'. This approach is one that argues for the importance of engaging with the mundane as opposed to the dominant structures in society like the state, for example. Hence, what specific interactions between the anthropologists and the informants can we glimpse from the archive and how did these impact the knowledge project?

<sup>15</sup> BC880 Monica and Godfrey Wilson Papers, University of Cape Town Libraries, Archive and Manuscripts Division.

<sup>16</sup> See C. Hamilton, V. Harris, J. Taylor, Michele Pickover, Razia Saleh and Graeme Reid, eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002). In South Africa the debates around the constitution and approaches to archives have been engaging. This book was undoubtedly a landmark in the scholarship on archival discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. Its approach towards the archive has been to critique the way historians previously saw and used archives as a storehouse of information and facts. It called for a more critical and self-

field writings as mediated documents in the ‘co-production of scientific knowledge’, in Schumaker’s term.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Monica and Godfrey Wilson Collection**

The collection<sup>18</sup> holds papers regarding the personal and working lives of Monica’s parents David and Jesse Hunter (the Hunter papers), and those of Monica and Godfrey Wilson. The process of making these papers an official archive accessible to the public took place between 1992 when the anthropologists’ sons Francis and Tim Wilson entered into negotiations with the University of Cape Town (UCT) to donate the collection to the institution. By 1999 the papers had been re-ordered, catalogued and indexed by the archivist Lesley Hart.

Of particular relevance to this study is the E section of the papers, which has to do with Godfrey’s three years of work in Northern Rhodesia. This section is labelled ‘Broken Hill Research’ and subdivided into 12 sections, which also have subdivisions within themselves. The E section includes 17 notebooks, recorded by Godfrey and his assistant Zacharia between 1938 and 1940. This series also has a significant body of folders with raw data of

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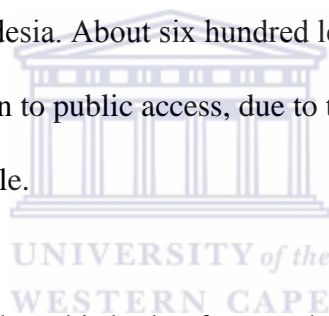
reflexive use of the archive, which not only questions the production of the information that historians seek from an archive but interrogates the construction of the archive itself by ‘reading along the grain’. Conversely, it is undeniable that archives *are* in fact storehouses of information. Consequently, historians will continue to mine them for precious as yet ‘undiscovered or unrecovered’ information, often by reading them ‘against their grain’ as social historians in Southern Africa have typically done with great success from the 1980s onwards. In this sense archives are still privileged places that provide sources of information in the production of knowledge and narration of histories. Are the approaches of ‘reading along the grain’ and ‘reading against the grain’, of approaching archives as source and archives as process, mutually exclusive? Much of the deconstructionist approach associated with the ‘archival turn’, either explicitly or implicitly, suggests this. Both approaches to archives inform my detailed reading of the Wilson papers held at UCT’s African Studies Library, in the Manuscripts and Archives Division. I want to propose that we should go beyond an overdrawn dualism between old/naïve vs. new/critical uses of archives: sources vs. subjects. I suggest that archives can be seen as epistemological sites whose configuration can be interrogated, and also as the same potentially rich repositories of historical information from which information can be retrieved and narratives constructed. In this way, I approached the Wilson papers as mediated documents from which I could construct a narrative.

<sup>17</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*.

<sup>18</sup> For a detailed account see Andrew Bank’s ‘Introduction’ to *Inside African Anthropology*, where he narrates ‘The Rich Life of the Wilson Collection’, 26–34.

biographical records of the Africans at Broken Hill. E2 to E6, for example, hold folders and files giving details of numerous men in Broken Hill in the different locations.

An earlier series in the catalogue is the B series, which lists a significant body of letters between the couple and various individuals and organisations. These letters proved significant to this research. Monica's weekly communication with her father revealed details of her and her husband's experiences in Northern Rhodesia, helping me to reconstruct Godfrey's fieldwork experiences, his interactions and routines, which help us understand the complexities of fieldwork as suggested by Lyn Schumaker.<sup>19</sup> One hundred and ten letters between Godfrey and the anthropologist Audrey Richards provided unique insights into Godfrey's work in Northern Rhodesia. About six hundred letters between Godfrey and Monica are unfortunately not open to public access, due to the private nature of the communication between the couple.



Read together and against each other, this body of papers helped me to adopt the fieldsite-oriented approach to the history of African anthropology developed by Schumaker (2001). Crucially, Schumaker proposes that we see the fieldsite as *the* central location of knowledge production in anthropology, where the exercises of power between the anthropologist, the assistant(s) and their informants were complex and collaborative.<sup>20</sup> She recommends that we attend to the nuances of anthropological fieldwork in colonial Africa by engaging with the ways in which the African context, the African assistants and African informants shaped the way anthropologists did their work. She calls for detailed attention to their on-site methods and practices, and introduces a range of useful theoretical concepts to frame these processes,

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<sup>19</sup> Lyn Schumaker, 'A Tent with a View: Colonial Officers, Anthropologists, and the Making of the Field in Northern Rhodesia, 1937–1960' in *Osiris*, 11 (1961), 237–58.

<sup>20</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 5.



most notably ‘the co-production of scientific knowledge’, ‘work culture’ and ‘Africanising anthropology’.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Micro-Politics of Social Scientific Knowledge Production in Africa**

Once an assistant is appointed for fieldwork, a triangulation of relationships between the anthropologist, the assistant(s), and the informant(s) occurs in the field. In critiques of anthropological endeavour, the focus is usually on the relationship between the anthropologists and the assistant and not on the other two ties, those of assistant/informant and those of informant/anthropologist. Perhaps it will help us to gauge the nature of this complex if we examine these other two ties as carefully.<sup>22</sup>

This project is broadly located within the history of anthropology which emerged as a subfield of anthropology in the 1970s following the self-reflexive and historic turn in the discipline.<sup>23</sup> Traditionally, the history of anthropology has been told within European, male frameworks that emphasised the contributions of European male founders and anthropologists to the innovation of theory and schools within the discipline.<sup>24</sup> Such approaches were concerned with telling the discipline’s history through successive schools of thought including functionalism, structuralism, and structural functionalism, and the stories of the founders of these schools, who were usually male and European.<sup>25</sup> These school-based approaches were challenged strongly by the emergence of postcolonial studies and micro-historical approaches to history which sought to deconstruct such grand narratives and histories by calling for more representative narratives, among other things for subaltern figures to feature within the historical narrative.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. See also Schumaker, ‘A Tent with a View’.

<sup>22</sup> P. Reynolds, ‘Gleanings and Leavings: Encounters in Hindsight’ in Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology*, 311.

<sup>23</sup> Henrika Kucklick, *A New History of Anthropology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Adam Kuper, *Anthropologists and Anthropology: The British School, 1922–1972* (London: Routledge, 1973).

<sup>25</sup> See ibid and David W. Hammond-Tooke, *Imperfect Interpreters: South Africa Africa’s Anthropologists 1920–1990* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, [1997] 2001).

In the case of Godfrey Wilson's work in Broken Hill, this work of recovering agency at the site of knowledge production is particularly necessary given that Wilson did not make direct reference to his assistant or informants in his published essays. This may have been because, as Andrew Bank argues in a recent essay on the anthropologist Monica Hunter Wilson and her assistants in the Eastern Cape and Pondoland, the 'writing out' of informants and in particular research assistants in the published texts of anthropologists was a methodological feature of the discipline in this interwar period. This ensured that ethnographers maintained the 'fiction' of 'ethnographic authority', thereby downplaying any 'sense of vulnerability, confusion or dependence' in the field.<sup>26</sup> Nancy Jacobs has also drawn attention to the fact that exclusions of contributions of local assistants in scientific research in the nineteenth century were a result of 'increasing racism and intellectual arrogance among whites.'<sup>27</sup>

It is partly because of this that Roger Sanjek, in a 1993 essay, argued that there was a 'hidden colonialism' in anthropology, in the sense that the intellectual contributions of the members of communities studied by anthropologists remained largely unacknowledged.<sup>28</sup>

Commenting specifically on Sanjek's characterisation of indigenous informants, Schumaker argues that

A focus on the anthropologists' exploitation of assistants [and informants] may cause one to downplay assistants' agency in fieldwork and exploitation of anthropologists for *their* own ends... [A]ssistants and informants can be 'indigenous ethnographers'

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<sup>26</sup> A. Bank, 'The "Intimate Politics" of Fieldwork: Monica Hunter Wilson and her African Assistants, Pondoland and the Eastern Cape, 1931–1932' in Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology*. See also Nancy Jacobs, 'The Intimate Politics of Ornithology in Colonial Africa', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48, 3 (2006), 569.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 568.

<sup>28</sup> Roger Sanjek, 'Anthropology's Hidden Colonialism: Assistants and Their Ethnographers' in *Anthropology Today*, 9, 2 (April 1993), 13–18.

with their own independent interest in cultural matters already existing or stimulated by the anthropologists' interest.<sup>29</sup>

She thus highlights that the informants' and assistants' own subjective positions influenced the ways in which they shaped the narratives and interacted with the anthropologists.<sup>30</sup> These counter-arguments foregrounding fieldwork and African agency are highly suggestive for my own reappraisal of the work of Zacharia Mawere and three Bemba informants in Godfrey Wilson's Broken Hill research.

Indeed, the interest in the work of African intermediaries in knowledge production during the colonial era is not novel, nor is scholarly interest in the biographies of these agents. Lawrence et al have echoed Schumaker's argument that Africans in the service of European colonialists, missionaries, administrators and scholars like anthropologists exercised a significant level of authority in their respective positions.<sup>31</sup> Lawrence et al argue, for instance, that African assistants were motivated by self-interest such as prestige and elevated social status to serve as intermediaries.<sup>32</sup> Writing on African assistants' motivations to work for anthropologists in Zambia and for the RLI, Schumaker has noted that this kind of work was prestigious and was a way in which Africans felt they could somehow participate in issues of social and political transformation in racially charged Northern Rhodesia. Schumaker suggests that the research assistants, most of who were drawn from the emerging educated African elite, chose to work for the institute in order to get a chance to get involved in the

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<sup>29</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 6.

<sup>30</sup> See among many others, Nancy J. Jacobs, 'Servants to Science: African Assistants in Twentieth Century Ornithology' (unpublished seminar paper, Centre for African Studies, UCT, May 2006); Megan Vaughan, 'Anthropologists and Others in Inter-War South West Tanganyika' (paper presented at the Monica Hunter Wilson Centenary Conference, Hogsback, 24–26 June 2008), 1–22; and A. Bank, 'Intimate Politics' of Fieldwork', 67–94.

<sup>31</sup> L. Ahearn, 'Language and Agency' in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30 (2001), 112.

<sup>31</sup> B. N. Lawrence, E. L. Osborn and R. I. Roberts, *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

cultural politics of Northern Rhodesia.<sup>33</sup> In her discussion on Jali Makwaya, a research assistant in ornithology, Nancy Jacobs has proposed that his motivations and deep interest in ornithology and his great contribution to research in Africa could have been motivated by scientific knowledge for its own sake.<sup>34</sup> Megan Vaughan's subject of interest, Kenneth Mdala, may have been interested in promoting his Yao heritage, as he has been accused elsewhere, but it is undeniable from Vaughan's narrative that he had a love of knowledge for its own sake that also contributed to his ethnographic endeavours.<sup>35</sup> Monica Wilson's cast of assistants and informants in her Eastern Cape Research – such as the nameless schoolteacher Mary Soga, Dr Rubusana and Michael Geza – must have had strong political and cultural motivation in their great contributions to her work.<sup>36</sup> The major problem, as highlighted earlier and as observed by Nancy Jacobs and Megan Vaughan, is the sources for writing life histories of assistants and informants, since the attention in such matters was always on the scholar and not the assistants.<sup>37</sup> This factor, coupled with the fact that scholars' fieldwork data and other records are usually bare of personal details of their assistants and the fact that assistants did not write about themselves, makes assistants and informants difficult biographical subjects.

Nevertheless, from the foregoing it is clear that the reconstruction of biographies of assistants, their motivation and their working relationships with social scientists has been done with some level of success, and is a useful way of rethinking histories of anthropology. While this literature has brought assistants and their agency in knowledge production to the fore, it has not as adequately probed the roles of informants in what Reynolds has called a

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<sup>33</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 13–14.

<sup>34</sup> Jacobs, 'Servants to Science', 1–29.

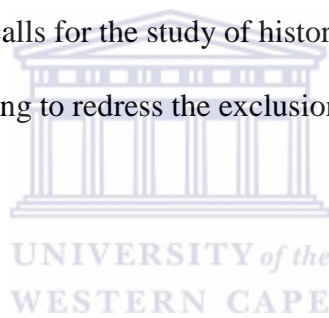
<sup>35</sup> Vaughan, 'Anthropologists and Others', 1–22.

<sup>36</sup> See A. Bank, "'Intimate' Politics of Fieldwork', 67–94.

<sup>37</sup> Jacobs, 'Servants to Science', 2–3.

‘triangulation of relationships’ between the anthropologist, the assistant and the informants. Reynolds suggests, that a fieldsite-based approach should equally study the relationships between the anthropologist and informants and those between the informants and assistants.<sup>38</sup>

It is within this general context that I will reflect on the complex contributions, diverse life histories and specific relationships of Wilson with Mawere and with a wider network of African interpreters, relationships affected by age, family background and personal disposition among other things. The picture that is likely to emerge is one of complexity, but also a far more profoundly Africanist and locally based project of knowledge production than the early 1990s micro-historical debates seem to suggest. The micro-historical approach prevailing in the 1970s to 1990s calls for the study of history from the margins of power and social structures, thereby attempting to redress the exclusions of macro-historical models in political and economic history.



### **Thesis Structure**

The foregoing section discussed the major contemporary debates in the history of anthropology under the subtheme of African intermediaries, assistants and informants. This section develops the suggestion for deepening the network of collaborators in the production of social science knowledge and thus for more fully ‘Africanising anthropology’ by foregrounding African interpreters.

Chapter One introduces the discussion on ‘the triangulation of relationships’ in this case study by examining one side of the triangle the anthropologist. It narrates the life and anthropological career of Godfrey Wilson (1908–1944). This will tell the story of his

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<sup>38</sup> Reynolds, ‘Gleanings and Leavings’, 310–11.

background, his training under Malinowski, his ‘intimate fieldwork style’, both in Bunyakyusa and Broken Hill, as well as his research methods at Broken Hill. I discuss his work at Broken Hill in light of the emerging African population and in particular his use of the biographic sketch as a central methodology, thus foregrounding the narratives of Zacharia Mawere and the key informants discussed in subsequent chapters. The focus will be on his fieldwork style based on masculine sociability, developing the insights of Marsland and extending them, based on a close knowledge of the extensive Bemba texts in Godfrey Wilson’s Broken Hill notebooks and dictionaries.

In Chapter Two I narrate the extensive life history and contribution to Godfrey’s research of Xavier Kofie, Godfrey’s language tutor and first informant in Northern Rhodesia. This chapter examines the interaction between the two men across age, culture and language. As Godfrey’s initial language tutor and foremost informant, I highlight the centrality of Xavier’s influence in orienting Godfrey to labour migrants’ experiences in urban areas, arguing that the interaction between Xavier and the anthropologist was central to Godfrey’s later research at Broken Hill.

In Chapter Three I follow similar studies on biographies of an indigenous anthropologist, a man between cultures who worked as a crucial bridge in producing knowledge about the society to which he belonged. This chapter excavates the life history of Zacharia Johan Mawere, Godfrey’s research assistant at Broken Hill. It makes an analogous argument for the centrality of his role in Wilson’s research project by documenting the working relationship between the two men and the life history of Mawere as a story in its own right.

Chapter Four concludes the examination of ‘the triangulation of relationships’ by uncovering information about Wilson and Mawere's relationships in the field with a network of Bemba informants based on a close reading of Bemba texts in the notebooks. My interest, following Pamela Reynolds’ proposed model, is in the relationships of these key informants with the anthropologist. Here the unusual decision of Wilson to record information in the form of individual life histories as detailed case studies at a time when the discipline's practitioners were oriented to the general and the abstract, such as structuralist models of research, offers a rare opportunity for the reader of anthropological field materials. This core chapter will present two life histories, those of Duncan Chanda and Mulenga Bisiketi.

Knowledge production in histories of anthropology and relationships between social scientists and interpreters have usually been discussed within two predominant models, namely ‘anthropology’s hidden colonialism’ and ‘collaboration’. In the last section of this thesis, I examine the implications of these two models, arguing that both concepts are problematic as frameworks for analysing relationships in knowledge production between anthropologists and indigenous interpreters. I follow recent work by Andrew Bank, Nancy Jacobs, Lyn Schumaker and Pamela Reynolds among others, in arguing for the complexity of these relationships, thereby casting this research as a case study in this sub-field. I reflect on how reading the interactions in the field within the general ideological contexts in which these relationships were formed, as suggested by Talal Asad, is a helpful methodological approach. This chapter further discusses the utility of this wider model based on triangulation and informants’ biography for rethinking how we can rewrite a more Africanist history of social anthropological knowledge production in Africa. How might this 'triangulation of relationships' and the biographical approach be put to work in analysing the field materials of other social anthropologists in twentieth-century Africa?

## CHAPTER ONE

### MALINOWSKI, MARX AND MASCULINITY: THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL TRAINING AND WORK OF GODFREY WILSON (1908–1944)

This chapter begins the examination of the ‘triangulation of relationships’ by discussing the life and anthropological career of Godfrey Wilson. The first part of this chapter follows the work of prominent historians of anthropology who criticise standard histories of anthropology for ‘treating cultural knowledge production exclusively in terms of the international circulation of ideas and published text’ and call for ‘a closer examination of the role that personal background of social anthropologist had played in shaping their work and orientation.’<sup>39</sup> I therefore foreground Godfrey’s Christian background, education, Marxist orientation and pacifist views as major influences in his personal life and work as an anthropologist. The chapter also briefly examines Godfrey’s work in Tanzania among the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938, drawing on recent work by Rebecca Marsland and the edited collection *Inside African Anthropology*, arguing that it is here, in this first field site as an anthropologist, that Godfrey developed his fieldwork style, one that significantly influenced his work and relations with Africans at Broken Hill. The chapter also examines Godfrey’s work at Broken Hill, his research methodologies and particularly how these enabled particular relations with his assistant Zacharia and his primary informants.

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<sup>39</sup> Edmund Leach, ‘Glimpses of the Unmentionable in the History of British Social Anthropology’ in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 13 (1984), 1–2.



## Background and Education

Godfrey Baldwin Wilson was born in 1908 in Cambridge, England. The son of the famous Shakespearean scholar John Dover Wilson, Godfrey attended school at Whitgift Grammar School in Croydon. He did his undergraduate studies at Hertford College, Oxford, commencing in 1927 under an Open Classical Scholarship. There, he graduated with a first class in 'Greats' and philosophy in 1931. In 1936, he completed his MA degree.<sup>40</sup>

Like most prominent anthropologists of the interwar British structural functionalist school,<sup>41</sup> Wilson studied under Bronislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics (LSE). Between 1932 and 1934, no doubt through the influence of Monica Wilson, whom he had met 1928, he went to LSE under a studentship of the International Institute of African Language and cultures. The institute was comprised of fellows from different nationalities and disciplines who were all bound for Africa to study the effects of European culture on African societies.<sup>42</sup> LSE was an invigorating intellectual environment for the studious Godfrey, who became deeply involved in Malinowski's weekly seminars. At LSE he had the opportunity to engage with a brilliant group of upcoming anthropologists such as Gordon Brown, Meyer Fortes, J. Hogstra, Margery Perham, S. Nadel, K. Oberg, Margaret Read, Gunter Wagner and his future wife Monica.<sup>43</sup> Audrey Richards describes Godfrey during his time at LSE as 'lively, assertive, full of ideas and energy and wholly committed to the new tasks ahead.'<sup>44</sup> In fact Richards was not the only one to remark on Godfrey's extrovert personality. Almost all of the obituaries from friends and colleagues open with a remark on

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<sup>40</sup> BC880, A1.13, Draft of Curriculum Vitae.

<sup>41</sup> See for example Kuper, *Anthropologists and Anthropology*. See also Hammond-Tooke, *Imperfect Interpreters*.

<sup>42</sup> Audrey Richards, 'Monica Wilson: An Appreciation' in Michael G. Whisson and Martin West, eds., *Religion and Social Change in Southern Africa: Anthropological Essays in Honour of Monica Wilson* (Cape Town: David Philip; London: Rex Collins, 1975), 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

his zest and energy.<sup>45</sup> At LSE Godfrey trained in the methods of anthropology charted by Malinowski, which were based on intense participant observation.

Godfrey was clearly Malinowski's favourite disciple, as reflected in this letter to the Rockefeller Foundation:

[Godfrey Wilson] is the coming man in anthropology; he is bound to become, barring unforeseen accidents, the leading British anthropologist of British extraction. I have not had a really first-rate student both as regards intelligence, application and character, of purely English nationality and heredity. Godfrey is one. He is, in every respect a first-rate man.<sup>46</sup>

This glowing recommendation clearly paid off. Godfrey was awarded the Rockefeller Fellowship, allowing him to induct anthropological research among the Nyakyusa of Tanzania from 1934 to 1935 and then from 1936 to 1938. He married Monica Hunter in March 1935 in Hogsback in the Eastern Cape. While Godfrey wrote up and published a number of articles from this research, the results of the 51 months of collective fieldwork of this husband and wife team were later published by Monica in four monographs (1951, 1957, 1959 and 1977) and several articles.<sup>47</sup>

In 1938, just after leaving Tanzania, and again on the strength of Malinowski's recommendations, Godfrey was appointed as the first director of the RLI, Northern Rhodesia. Based on the earlier fieldwork in Tanzania and the fieldwork conducted by Godfrey in Northern Rhodesia, Godfrey and Monica produced *An Analysis of Social Change Based on*

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<sup>45</sup> See for example, *Africa: Journal of international African Institute*, 14, 8 (October 1944), 429–30, and Audrey Richards, 'Godfrey Wilson, 1908–1944' in *Man*, 44 (September–October 1944), 125–6.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted by Marsland, "Fraternising with Africans," 3.

<sup>47</sup> Marsland, "Fraternising with Africans," 2.

*Observations in Central Africa*, which was one of the earliest attempts to theorise social change and the first study to feature the concept in its title.<sup>48</sup>

During his three years as director of the institute, Godfrey conducted a highly significant research project at Broken Hill. He focused on urban anthropology and social change, two themes that had been gaining ground in African anthropology in the 1930s. He employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to study consumption and behavioural patterns of Africans. Using dialectical arguments in which he presented evidence on the patterns of rural and urban migration, length of stay in the urban centre by Africans, wages and expenditure and an emerging urban culture among Africans, Godfrey concluded decisively that, despite the colonial government's policy to maintain a labour force based on migrant labour, the African workers in Broken Hill were increasingly severing ties with their rural homelands and developing a permanent urban presence and an associated culture. This was at odds with the colonial government's policy that the developing industrial system was still based on the labour of rural migrants in order to avoid responsibilities such as providing appropriate urban housing for the workforce, urban social amenities like hospitals, schools, housing as well as to maintain European workers' privileges such as higher wages and monopoly of specialised jobs.

The migrant labour system in towns on the on the Copperbelt, in Broken Hill and other towns along the railway line from Livingstone to the Copperbelt can be understood within the general history of the annexation of Northern Rhodesia by the British South African Company (BSAC). Andrew Roberts has observed that, for the company, Northern Rhodesia was an awkwardly placed 'piece of debris resulting from Rhodes' failure to obtain

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<sup>48</sup> Godfrey Wilson and Monica H. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change: Based on Observations in Central Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945).

Katanga.<sup>49</sup> From the turn of the century until the late 1920s, Northern Rhodesia remained little more than a labour reservoir for Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. In light of this, the colonial government did not see it as necessary to invest in the colony and was only concerned with reducing its expenditure there. Additionally, it was more favourable for the white settlers to prevent a permanent labour force of Africans as such stability would have increased the likelihood that Africans would gain skills and compete with white workers for more skilled and better-paying work.<sup>50</sup> The migrant labour system was thus seen as a cheaper and less cumbersome option.

The migrant labour system was also in line with the British colonial policy of indirect rule, which claimed to preserve tradition and traditional African life, but which Mamdani has argued was even more corrosive.<sup>51</sup> In this policy, the British moved from the assimilationist policy of direct rule to that of indirect rule, which sought to manage difference by the creation of difference, and defined Africans as bound by geography –rural homelands –and timeless tradition.<sup>52</sup> Hence the assumption by colonial administrators and mining companies that the African labourer would inevitably return to their rural homelands.

### **Marxism, Pacifism, Christianity and Objective Science**

It is clear from Godfrey's writings, his attitudes to life and his work, and his relations with Europeans and especially Africans in the field, that he had strong Marxist sympathies, was a proclaimed pacifist and was strongly influenced by Christian socialism. A combination of his philosophical training and Christian family background influenced him towards these

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<sup>49</sup> Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London: Holmes and Meier, 1976), 284–5. See also Kate Crehan, 'Tribes and the People Who Read Books: Managing History in Colonial Zambia' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23, 2 (June 1997), 205.

<sup>50</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 28–9.

<sup>51</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2013), 8.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

orientations. These particular influences not only shaped his published text, such as a strong sense of class differentiation as an explanatory framework in the *Essay* and the co-authored *Analysis of Social Change*, but significantly also influenced his attitudes and relationships with his African informants on the ground.

Godfrey was born into a strong Christian family. He was born in the vicarage at Hawson, where his maternal grandfather Canon Edward Curtis Baldwin was the vicar. Godfrey and his wife Monica shared the same socially engaged Christian faith. In fact they met at a student peace conference in Geneva organised by Alfred Zimmerman under the auspices of the League of Nations. Godfrey was influenced by R. H. Tawney's *Christian Sociology*,<sup>53</sup> which called on social scientists to be activists against the unfair effects of capitalism, and in which God is central to human history and man's condition is determined by choices that individuals make.<sup>54</sup> This is evident in Godfrey's notes and the prayers written down in his devotional diaries and notes made in his hymn book.<sup>55</sup> Here he writes of God as the creator of the world, the living God, the ruler of history and the father of Jesus Christ, and our Father. He concludes with a reflection on the 'awful humility of God'.<sup>56</sup> He laments his own and humanity's sinfulness, wretchedness and selfishness, that makes 'humanity incapable of love unless this love comes from God', who despite His 'awful holiness' and our 'wretchedness loves us still', and give us hope through his love.

His daily routine included personal prayers every day at 7:40 a.m. and prayers at the chapel at 8 a.m. It is clear that while at Oxford he was a member of the student Christian movement.

His address book during this time includes no less than seven contact details of men of the

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<sup>53</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 59. See also Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank, *Inside African Anthropology*, 140.

<sup>54</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 59.

<sup>55</sup> BC880, A1.7, Hymn book: *Hymns of the Kingdom* and A1.8, *A Devotional diary*, arranged by J. Oldham.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

collar. In Northern Rhodesia, just months upon reaching Livingstone, Godfrey quickly joined the Anglican Church, and must have been a devoted member, if we count his selection as an usher at the church shortly after arriving in Livingstone as an indication. Godfrey's Christianity also influenced his professed pacifism, which must have surely been equally influenced by his involvement in the Oxford student Christian movement of the 1920s and 1930s, where pacifist inclinations were typical. The influence that this movement had on Godfrey is undeniable, in that it arguably shaped Godfrey's Christian beliefs as well as his socialist activism. These general influences also impacted on his view of 'Anthropology as a Public Service', in which he perceived anthropology as working for the good of society by producing facts and recommending policies that would lead to better social relations between different cultures.<sup>57</sup>



Richard Brown, writing on the tensions between applied anthropologists like Godfrey and the colonial governments, termed Godfrey's work in Northern Rhodesia as a 'marriage of Marx and Malinowski'.<sup>58</sup> While it is easy to understand the latter part of this label due to Godfrey's training under Malinowski and his use of Malinowskian methodologies like participant observation, I attempt here a fuller explanation for Godfrey's Marxist orientation.

Godfrey undoubtedly employed the Marxist class struggle as the analytical framework. Additionally, Godfrey used Karl Marx's historical materialism as the analytical framework for the study of African migrant labourers in Broken Hill and used it for his analyses in the *Essay* as well as the co-authored book, *The Analysis of Social Change*. Commenting on *The Analysis of Social Change*, Brown observes that it 'must be one of the most ambitious brief attempts to explain the overall processes of change since the *Communist Manifesto*'

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<sup>57</sup> Godfrey Wilson, 'Anthropology as a Public Service', 43–61.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, 'Anthropology and Colonial Rule', 195.

(emphasis in original).<sup>59</sup> The *Essay* unpretentiously rested upon the foundational tenets of Marx's historical materialism, which applies theories of class difference in analysis of society. In the *Essay*, Godfrey argued that African society had progressed to the last stage of capitalism as a result of contact with Europeans, and that capitalism and capitalist interest in Northern Rhodesia depended on African rural impoverishment and the disadvantaging of Africans in urban centres to survive.<sup>60</sup> This situation was full of 'social tension' and 'disequilibrium'. In this explanatory framework social conditions had become entangled with the prevailing economic conditions which, in turn, had resulted from the world capitalist environment and its associated problems of exploitation of one class over another. The disequilibrium and social tensions resulted from the ways in which Africans were subjected to poverty and undesirable conditions because of the rural–urban migration which left rural areas without the manpower to work the land and led these rural areas to extreme poverty,<sup>61</sup> as well as the tensions resulting in maintaining an unskilled, low-paid African population in the urban centres. This status quo would remain because it benefited the Europeans as long as they were more concerned with 'the production of producers' goods, high dividends and guns, than with that of consumers' goods, high wages – and butter.'<sup>62</sup> This privileged Europeans as the owners of capital while disadvantaging Africans. Godfrey argued that the contemporary conditions of Northern Rhodesia and its related problems, such as 'uneven economic development' between the rural and urban areas and the problems of the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 188.

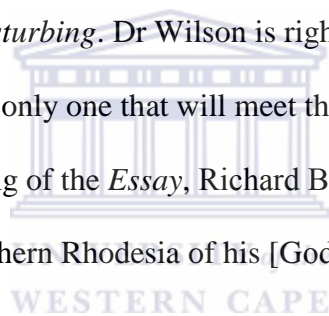
<sup>60</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 18. See also Godfrey Wilson and Monica H. Wilson, *Analysis of Social Change*, 16.

<sup>61</sup> This assessment was also made in earlier work by Audrey Richards, conducted in the Bemba countryside during extended fieldwork among the Bemba between 1930 and 1931 and again from 1933 to 1934. See Audrey Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe: A Functional Study of Nutrition Among the Southern Bantu* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932) and Audrey Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939).

<sup>62</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 54.

urbanisation of the African labour force and its resultant ‘social tensions’ were consequences of the new economic ‘factors and relations of production between Europeans and Africans’.<sup>63</sup>

In her analysis of Godfrey’s *Essay* and *The Analysis of Social Change*, Lyn Schumaker proposes that Godfrey anticipated later Marxist anthropology and later critiques of imperialism and its resulting underdevelopment in African societies.<sup>64</sup> From the *Essay* Godfrey’s shift from the tribal model of functionalism and his attention to economic and political perspectives in analysing historical developments are evidence of Schumaker’s assertion. In her glowing review of the *Essay*, the anthropologist Margaret Read noted, ‘For the government official and missionary no less than for the sociologist and economist, the present situation is *profoundly disturbing*. Dr Wilson is right that a comprehensive long-term economic and social policy is the only one that will meet the needs of town and country alike’ (emphasis mine).<sup>65</sup> Speaking of the *Essay*, Richard Brown concluded that it was ‘a *passionate indictment* of the Northern Rhodesia of his [Godfrey’s] day’ (emphasis mine).<sup>66</sup>



Additionally, as I discuss in Chapter Four, Godfrey’s fieldnotes reveal deep sympathies with Africans regarding their disadvantaged social status. In a 1940 letter from Monica to her father discussing the 1940 Copperbelt strikes, which had been caused in part by low African wages, Monica reported that ‘Godfrey has records of unfair dismissal [of Africans at Broken Hill], he has been producing figures for the govt. on rising living cost of living for Africans.’<sup>67</sup> These specific themes of unfair racial relations are carried forward throughout the *Essay*.

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<sup>63</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 27.

<sup>64</sup> Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 58.

<sup>65</sup> Margaret Reed, ‘Review of *The Economics of Detribalisation*’ in *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 40, 161 (October 1941), 376–7.

<sup>66</sup> Brown, ‘Anthropology and Colonial Rule’, 194.

<sup>67</sup> BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, 10 April 1940.



Godfrey's *Essay* was also behind the intense academic debate between the scholars James Fergusson and Hugh Macmillan in the early 1990s. The former attacked Wilson's theory of economic change among labor migrants, suggesting that he had followed an unproblematised, analytically faulty, linear, naively progressive and liberal model.<sup>68</sup> Ferguson saw the findings of his own fieldwork on the Copperbelt between 1985 and 1989 as directly contradicting Wilson's 'expectations of modernity' whose view of African history was teleological.<sup>69</sup>

A number of scholars have disagreed with Ferguson's analysis, most prominently Hugh Macmillan. In his response to James Ferguson, Macmillan endorsed Wilson's research findings. He noted, for example, that Wilson had never denied that Africans in urban centers continued to have links with their rural homelands, thereby refuting the idea that Wilson followed an orderly simplistic linear model. He also argued decisively that Wilson's projections about the increasing urbanization of Africans were, in fact, correct, a finding supported by more recent studies including those of Hansen and Chansa.

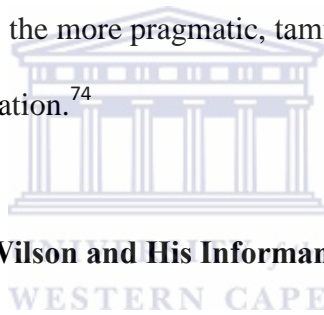
Godfrey can nevertheless be criticised for his positivist and moralistic belief in the role of anthropology and its objectivity. In his 'Anthropology as a Public Service', Godfrey posits anthropology as an objective social science that can be put to work for the good of society by studying 'social facts' and recommending appropriate policy based on these 'facts' without the anthropologist implicating himself with any moral judgement. In one of her letters reacting to Godfrey's drafts of the *Essay*, Audrey Richards was one of the first to note the discordance between Godfrey's claim to objectivity and his moral judgement against

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<sup>68</sup> Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

colonialism.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, while Godfrey's attempt to project 1930s Northern Rhodesia's economic development onto the global scale has been praised as moving away from the ethnic and tribal study of African life to more contemporary forms of study like social change in his time, this approach has equally been criticised for the grandness and theoretical liberty which Godfrey applied. In one letter responding to Godfrey's drafts of the *Essay* Richards protests: 'It is this kind of theory about the inevitability of new world orders, primary industries, causes of war etc. which seems to me to be highly speculative.'<sup>71</sup> She hoped that he would not 'think that my middle aged caution cramps your free style'.<sup>72</sup> In response to these critiques, Godfrey begged to be allowed 'a little theory too!'.<sup>73</sup> In Monica and Godfrey's joint authorship it is also clear that, while Godfrey was the more innovative and theoretically ambitious of the two, Monica was the more pragmatic, taming Godfrey's sometimes overenthusiastic theoretical inclination.<sup>74</sup>



### **In 'Good Company': Godfrey Wilson and His Informants in Bunyakyusa and Broken Hill**

Godfrey arrived in Kinyakyusa in August 1934 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. He set off to Bunyakyusa<sup>75</sup> from South Africa, where he had stayed from May to July. In South Africa he visited his fiancée's family, had meetings with the growing circle of anthropologists in South Africa, but most importantly got a feel of African lives in the locations and different African residential areas.

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<sup>70</sup> BC880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, Audrey Richards to Godfrey Wilson, 18 October 1940.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, Godfrey Wilson to Audrey Richards, 13 November 1938.

<sup>74</sup> Morrow, "'This Is From the Firm,'" 1., and Rebecca Marsland, 'Pondo Pins and Nyakyusa Hammers', in Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology*, 129.

<sup>75</sup> *Good Company: A Study of Nyakuyusa Age-villages* (London: International African Institute, [1951] 1968) is one of the books written by Monica Wilson using materials from their joint fieldwork in Tanganyika, but mostly drawn from Godfrey's research. The book argues that Nyakuyusa society was based on 'age-villages', where contemporaries lived in their own villages.

In Bunyakyusa he quickly developed networks and friendships with various informants. By the time Monica arrived, Godfrey had settled into his fieldwork, learned Kinyakyusa with the help of his assistant Leonard Mwaisumo, and developed a Kinyakyusa dictionary for Monica.<sup>76</sup> The Wilsons were in Bunyakyusa until February 1938, with a break from December 1935 to August 1936, which they spent at LSE.<sup>77</sup>

Godfrey's Bunyakyusa research had an important bearing on his research at Broken Hill. The Nyakyusa research was his first real taste of fieldwork. It is here that he developed what Marsland proposes we see as his personal fieldwork style of getting immersed in the masculine sociability of Nyakyusa men, which involved pursuits like beer drinking, hunting, eating together and discussing women and sex.<sup>78</sup> When we review Robert Morrell's suggestion that theories and investigations on masculinities should be brought to bear on Southern African historiography, Marsland's observation about Godfrey's fieldwork style opens up interesting insights for engaging with Godfrey's work in both Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia. In defining masculinity as 'configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships' that could exist in many forms at any given time and space, we see that in both Bunyakyusa and Northern Rhodesia Godfrey established specific masculine relations that allowed him to form male ties with his informants.

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<sup>76</sup> For details of the working relationship between the Wilsons and Leonard Mwaisumo see S. P. Lekgoathi, T. Mwakaseke and A. Bank, 'Working with the Wilsons: The Brief Career of a 'Nyakyusa Clerk' (1910–1938)' in Andrew Bank and Leslie J. Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology*, 162–86.

<sup>77</sup> Morrow, "'This is From the Firm,'" 9.

<sup>78</sup> Marsland, 'Pondo Pins and Nyakyusa Hammers', 131–3; also see Marsland, "'Fraternising with Africans,'" 1–3.

From September to December 1938 when Godfrey went to Kasama to continue his Bemba language learning, he forged male bonds within Bemba villages, mostly as a guest to chiefs in villages where Audrey Richards had previously worked. These were mainly at Paramount Chief Chitimukulu's palace and Senior Chief Mwamba's palace, where Godfrey spent time at the court in the company of chiefs' messengers, retainers and royal advisers.<sup>79</sup> Here Godfrey formed bonds with men in Bemba society. Nearly all his informants were men. The fieldnotes reveal Godfrey's involvement in masculine activities such as beer drinking, discussions at the *insaka* (a place where men take their meals and beer or sit to converse), and language learning that was done when doing male work like making fishing nets. The importance of masculinity in the field is strikingly revealed in a case in which Audrey, among other things, asks Godfrey to find out about the ritual strangulation of Bemba kings, which she had 'never heard a whisper about' while staying among the Bemba, but which an amateur anthropologist had written about in connection with a neighbouring ethnic group.<sup>80</sup> Audrey had been kept in the dark about this practice because such knowledge was held in secrecy by *bakabilo*, male royal counsellors and keepers of Bemba royal graves. In letters to Audrey mostly written in November 1938, Godfrey gives weekly reports on this practice, always referring to informants he was asking about the ritual. All of them were men and included chiefs' messengers, several 'old men', village headmen and elders. By December, when we last hear about this practice, Godfrey had provided a detailed narrative about the practice to Audrey.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly at Broken Hill, Godfrey got immersed and was accepted in the masculine sociability of men in the compounds. As I demonstrate shortly in a discussion on his methodology at Broken Hill, he spent most of his days talking to and visiting men in their

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<sup>79</sup> See BC880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, September to November 1938, in particular 17 October and 13 November 1938.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> BC880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, 4 and 17 October and 8, 13, 14, 20 and 30 November 1938.

homes, while his informants also called on him at home. The forming of these male bonds was enabled by the fact that Godfrey and the men at Broken Hill were roughly the same age and shared male pursuits like smoking, talking and leisure in public spaces. He attended several dance competitions and made observations in male spaces like the beer hall.

Godfrey's sociability with African men was frowned upon by other Europeans, who accused him of 'fraternising with Africans'.<sup>82</sup> By April 1940 the mining managers at Broken Hill openly resisted his methodologies of close involvement with African men. Writing about Godfrey's experiences at Broken Hill, Monica narrated:

Compound managers were critical of an outsider who spoke better *Icibemba* than they did, and established easy relationships with [male] workers. The mining company offered to build an office and supply a messenger to summon informants, if only the anthropologist would stop visiting men in the quarters, chatting and smoking with them. It was alright, a compound manager said, to give cigarettes to workers, but *not* right to smoke with them.<sup>83</sup>

Godfrey's relations with African men at Broken Hill also usually went beyond issues related to work, but equally involved personal issues. He seems to have had easy and interesting personal relationships with his own domestic workers. In Kasama, his cook was a man named Bulaya, who according to Audrey was 'a good old thing and terrible gossip' and whose regards Godfrey always sent to Audrey in his letters to her. In Broken Hill Godfrey's fieldnotes reveal interesting personal exchanges with his domestic worker there. In one instance Charlie, his domestic worker, approached Godfrey to request his help in resolving a disagreement with his elder brother.<sup>84</sup> The elder brother, who had come in from the

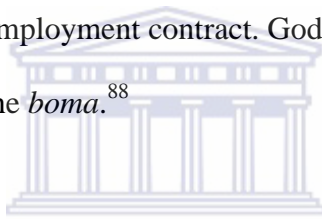
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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, October 1940 and see also M. Wilson, 'First Three Years, 1938–41', 278–9.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 279.

<sup>84</sup> BC880, E9.8, 'Houseboys' notes, Charlie Sebediah, conversations between Charlie and Godfrey of 11 December 1939 to 24 February 1940. Charlie was a Bemba from Mporokoso who had worked for Audrey Richards at one time, swatting flies. He had left the village around 1927, when he had gone to work in Ndola. He had held at least eleven different jobs since arriving in town earning between 20 and 30 shillings per month in these jobs. He worked for the Wilsons as a houseboy, a job that seemed to involve cleaning, cooking and making tea at 25 shillings per month as at 5 December 1939. Godfrey indicates that he collected this 'work history' from Charlie's *chitupa* (pass book). Charlie was married to a Bemba woman called Nsama and had

Copperbelt, was requesting that Charlie sell his bicycle in order to send money to their mother. Charlie had stayed 12 years in town without sending any money or gifts back home. Charlie did not want to sell the bicycle, but seems to have failed to stand up to this brother. He therefore decided to mobilise Godfrey's help in a scheme in which Godfrey would tell the elder brother that Charlie needed the bicycle to report for work early.<sup>85</sup> Godfrey did not seem to have agreed to this.<sup>86</sup> In another incident a desperate Charlie approached Godfrey requesting an advance so that he could buy new clothes for an upcoming dancing competition with Africans from the Copperbelt who were coming to Broken Hill for the occasion. Godfrey refused to advance the money, much to the annoyance of Charlie.<sup>87</sup> Another time, two Africans went to Godfrey with a request that he arbitrate in a personal disagreement regarding unfair payments in an employment contract. Godfrey refused to intervene, advising the men to settle their dispute at the *boma*.<sup>88</sup>



These incidents demonstrate continuities between Godfrey's research in Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia. As I have demonstrated, he 'naively' transported his fieldwork style of immersion in African life to developing male friendships at Broken Hill.<sup>89</sup> He also applied his knowledge of Bunyakusa to his Bemba learning in Northern Rhodesia. Here his dictionaries show how he translated Bemba words to Bunyakusa during his Bemba learning, always looking for similarities between the two languages. His initial dictionaries of July 1938, when he learnt Bemba at Livingstone under Xavier Kofie Godfrey, made a dictionary of Bemba-Kinyakusa verbs.<sup>90</sup>

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been charged five pounds as *lobola*, of which he only managed to pay four. He lived on the government farms from February 1940.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, conversations between Charlie and Godfrey of 24 February 1940.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 19.

<sup>89</sup> Marsland, "Fraternising with Africans", 5.

<sup>90</sup> BC880, E1.1, Notebooks containing Chibemba vocabulary.

Marsland's description of Godfrey's Nyakyusa field writing sounds uncannily like a description of his field writings at Broken Hill.<sup>91</sup> As in Bunyakyusa, Godfrey recorded his information in A5 hardbound notebooks. He writes the place and date on the cover of each notebook, including occasionally a title. As in his Bunyakyusa notebooks, Godfrey recorded his Broken Hill notes on one side of the page, using the adjacent blank page to write extra notes such as short explanations, follow-up questions and frequently, especially in the earlier part of his research, new vocabulary. Some of the notebooks are numbered, but rarely so. As Marsland observes of Godfrey's Bunyakyusa notebooks, it is easy to pick out different styles of writing in Godfrey's Northern Rhodesia notes as well. Chief among these are records of whole conversations with an informant or group of informants, almost always men. He also frequently transcribes, such as when taking dictation when recording life histories and other narratives. When he asks questions on these occasions he records his questions as well as the answers of the interviewees, using symbols in the form of dashes to indicate where his question or comment starts and ends. There is also evidence of description, to use James Clifford's term, as when Godfrey writes up his notes after his observation as he does for portions of Xavier Kofie's life history.<sup>92</sup> He probably did this at home in the evening, as Monica informs her father in one communication.<sup>93</sup>

### **Godfrey in Northern Rhodesia**

In May 1938 Godfrey officially took up the position of director of the newly created RLI. He beat two other contenders for the job, his long-standing friend Audrey Richards on account of her being a woman and Max Gluckman (who would later be appointed the institute's second

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<sup>91</sup> Marsland, 'Pondo Pins and Nyakyusa Hammers', 150.

<sup>92</sup> James Clifford, 'Notes on (Field)notes' in Roger Sanjek, ed., *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology* (Ithaca NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 58.

<sup>93</sup> BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, 10 December 1939.

director) because he was Jewish. At the time of his appointment Godfrey was only 29 years old; he had no doctorate and had only one, but intensely lengthy, experience of fieldwork in Tanzania. His appointment for the position was boosted by the support of powerful patrons like Joseph Houldsworth Oldham, Lord Lugard and Malinowski. He had the advantage of being male and English as noted above, which, combined with his training and zeal, had helped him rise quickly in the small circle of interwar British anthropologists and made him the ideal choice for the prestigious position.

Monica's rich and detailed weekly letters to her father provide us with minute details of the transition from the rural countryside of Tanganyika to the totally different world of Northern Rhodesia. We know that the couple flew from Mbeya to Johannesburg in early February 1938 and arrived in Johannesburg, where they stayed for some days socialising and shopping, for example, for the new director's 'new case of clothes'.<sup>94</sup> The couple spent some time at Monica's home at Hogsback, returning to Johannesburg in late April, where they continued to prepare for their new life in Northern Rhodesia. With the obvious advantage of Godfrey's improved salary of 700 pounds per annum, with annual 50 pound increments – they bought a car and left Johannesburg for Northern Rhodesia by road via Beit Bridge and Bulawayo.<sup>95</sup> They arrived in Livingstone on 30 April. On 1 May, their first day in Livingstone, Monica writes to her father reporting, 'Here we are safely in Livingstone. We got in last night rather tired after a had (sic) road from Bulawayo, but alright.'<sup>96</sup> Much to the relief of the couple, there was no one to meet them on their arrival at Livingstone; 'rather glad of a quiet day,' Monica wrote. On their first day in Livingstone, the new director and his wife went to see the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 29 January 1938.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 1 May 1938.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.



Victoria falls, the temperature was 87 degrees Fahrenheit and it was dusty; 'we shall get to like it very much,' Monica predicted.<sup>97</sup>

By 12 May the new couple had settled quite comfortably into their respective new roles as government employee and government employee's wife. While Godfrey became settled in the life of the civil service Monica, whom the couple had agreed would not work (probably to start a family), tried her hand at homemaking and socialising. Godfrey faithfully kept government hours, starting his day at the office at 8, breaking for lunch from 12 to 2 and knocking off at 4.<sup>98</sup> Monica attended and hosted morning and afternoon teas, played bridge, and enjoyed sun downers and boating on the Zambezi River. The new director spent his early days in office, 'seeing locations and reading reports'<sup>99</sup> and familiarising himself with Northern Rhodesia before embarking on his fieldwork. His wife became the lady of the house, supervising the cook (who was 'teachable') and the houseboy (who 'spoke no known language'), hanging curtains, baking, and working hard to coax a garden out of the barren Livingstone soil.<sup>100</sup> By July, both fronts had made remarkable progress. Monica was, as she reported to her father, 'getting quite good at this 'ere lady business'.<sup>101</sup>

Her husband, meanwhile, was getting good at the business of becoming an anthropologist. He set out to get a preliminary feel of African urban life through a survey and some initial fieldwork in townships and locations in Livingstone, notably in the Maramaba and Railway compounds.<sup>102</sup> He had made great strides in his Bemba language, as indicated in Monica's letter of 23 July to her father in which she reports, 'G. [Godfrey] seems to be pulling on fast

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 20 June 1938.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father May to July 1938.

<sup>102</sup> BC880, E11.2, Livingstone, notes on Maramaba compound and railway compound.

with Chi Bemba.<sup>103</sup> Very importantly for the development and future of the institute, Godfrey had set his foot down on the demands of the trustees to direct the form of research that the institute was to carry out, drawing up a three-year plan of research which was to form the foundation of Gluckman's famous seven-year plan.<sup>104</sup> It is therefore remarkable that Godfrey, with no previous administrative experience, should have charted these waters so well.

Nevertheless, despite these small victories, Godfrey's hopes to conduct research on the Copperbelt were never realised. Although he had put in requests with several mining compounds on the Copperbelt, he never got permission to work there, nor did he ever carry out any research there. The reasons for the refusal of permission for Godfrey to conduct research on the Copperbelt forms an important backdrop to the later withdrawal of permission for Godfrey to continue research at Broken Hill in April 1940 and his resignation in May 1941. He did, however, conduct a few weeks of preliminary surveys on the Copperbelt, on at least two separate trips in November and December 1938, when he visited different African locations around the Copperbelt and the mines, and talked to mine managers and government officials. He was never allowed to talk to Africans during this visit. In an early 1938 letter to Godfrey, Audrey Richards, full of concern, wrote that Dougal Malcolm, one of the RLI's patrons, had asked her to warn Godfrey about a possible negative reception by the Copperbelt mining company managers. She warned Godfrey that 'these gents' were 'never sunny towards strangers'.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, 1 May 1938.

<sup>104</sup> See Schumaker, *Africanising Anthropology*, 39.

<sup>105</sup> BC880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, 25 August 1938.

Richard Brown has drawn attention to the antagonism that the institute faced from the very time its idea was mooted by Hubert Young.<sup>106</sup> Anthropologists and methods that involved too much close contact with Africans were unwelcome in a society as racially stratified as colonial Northern Rhodesia, where the white minority worked hard to maintain the status quo. The government and especially mining companies were uneasy with an anthropologist relating to Africans especially on the Copperbelt, where the 1935 riots indicated growing problems between Africans and Europeans as a result of racial inequalities. The mining companies and government workers were also apprehensive that an anthropologist might incite criticism of their policies

### **Broken Hill**

Before embarking on his research at Broken Hill, in line with general Malinowskian methods and social anthropological methodologies of the time, Godfrey spent time learning Bemba, a local language that he used as his language of transaction. With about seventy-three local languages to choose from, it is easy to understand why Godfrey chose Bemba. Firstly, not until late 1938 did Godfrey realise that he would never be allowed to work on the Copperbelt. Hence, he chose Bemba because it was quickly emerging as the lingua franca along the line of rail and especially on the Copperbelt where Godfrey hoped to work. This is because while less than 10 per cent of the men at Broken Hill were Bemba, the majority of the migrant workers on the Copperbelt must have been Bemba or must have been more familiar with Bemba than any other language. This is because Bembaland was closer to the Copperbelt than the other areas from where migrant workers came, places nearer Wankie in Southern Rhodesia. Additionally, variants of Bemba such as Lamba were/are spoken throughout the Copperbelt. Moreover, Godfrey was obviously influenced by earlier work done by Audrey

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<sup>106</sup> See Brown, 'Anthropology and Colonial Rule', 178.

Richards among the Bemba. In February 1938 he wrote to Malinowski: 'I am trying to follow up Audrey's work with a study of the Bemba ... on the mine and in town. I am very pleased to have an opportunity of applying our methods to urban conditions.'<sup>107</sup> Godfrey therefore interviewed mostly Bemba informants at Broken Hill. We must however note that, other than Nyanja (another lingua franca in urban areas), there could not have been another language more appropriate for urban research, either on the Copperbelt or at Broken Hill. This is because the influence of the Copperbelt on the line of rail was strong enough to have established Bemba as a lingua franca of urban areas other than the Copperbelt, even today. Additionally details in the biographic sketches show that most men had worked on the Copperbelt, so that even those who were not Bemba must have spoken it.

Earlier in February 1938, Godfrey had taken a trip to Bembaland to start his language learning. He continued to learn Bemba in Livingstone between July and September 1938 under the tutorage of Xavier Kofie, whose engaging life history and relationship to Godfrey is covered in the following chapter.

Godfrey returned to Kasama from September to the end of November 1938, continuing to learn Bemba in the villages there as a guest of Paramount Chief Chitimukulu and Senior Chief Mwamba. By November 1938 Godfrey could record full conversations in Bemba and was assisting Audrey Richards in clarifying some of her data. In a November 1938 letter, Audrey called Godfrey a 'linguistic genius' for having mastered Bemba so swiftly.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> BC880, B4.11, Correspondence with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Godfrey Wilson to B. Malinowski, 2 February 1938.

<sup>108</sup> BC880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, Godfrey Wilson to Audrey Richards, November 1938.

On 1 December, Godfrey left Kasama for the Copperbelt en route to Livingstone. In the Copperbelt, he looked around in different mines like Nkana, Nchanga and Roan Antelope and talked to mining managers and government officers there. He visited a number of African locations, including some schools, and wrote up his observations regarding the conditions of Africans in those places. While his notes record conversations with Europeans, he does not seem to have spoken to any Africans during this visit. He left Ndola for Lusaka on 16 December, where he did surveys in various locations. On 23 December, Godfrey arrived back in Livingstone ‘looking fitter than when he started north and in excellent spirits.’<sup>109</sup>

### ***The Economics of Detribalisation: Godfrey at Broken Hill***

Due to the fears of the mine managers on the Copperbelt that Godfrey’s research would stir up discontent and unrest among Africans there, Godfrey settled for Broken Hill as his research base. Godfrey wrote to Audrey Richards in 1940 that it was in fact Hubert Young who had suggested that he work at Broken Hill with the possibility of proceeding to the Copperbelt later.<sup>110</sup> Despite the fact that Broken Hill was not as cosmopolitan as the Copperbelt and the rate of industrialisation was not as high, it nevertheless proved to be as good for the research.

Broken Hill (Kabwe) is a town located between Lusaka and the Copperbelt, about 104 kilometres north of Lusaka and 164 kilometres south of the Copperbelt. In 1902 huge deposits of zinc and lead together with other minerals like silver, manganese, cadmium, vanadium and titanium were discovered at Broken Hill. Until the late 1920s, when copper mining was at its height on Zambia’s Copperbelt, Broken Hill remained the major industrial

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<sup>109</sup> BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, December 1938.

<sup>110</sup> BC880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, Godfrey Wilson to Audrey Richards, October 1940.

town in the colony. By 1906 the first railway in Northern Rhodesia, built from Livingstone to Broken Hill, had been constructed. The railway was operated by Southern Rhodesian Railways, which established Broken Hill as its major operative town in Northern Rhodesia. After the Broken Hill mine, the railway was the second largest employer of both European and African labour. Hence Broken Hill was quite an industrial hub during the time of Wilson's research.<sup>111</sup>

In the *Essay*, Part I, Godfrey provides a detailed description of Broken Hill at the time of his research. By this time, Broken Hill had grown to be quite a cosmopolitan town, with its populations made up of 'a great many' Europeans, 15,000 Africans and a smaller population of Indians who operated trading stores and tailoring businesses.<sup>112</sup> Of the 15,000 Africans, 7500 were men, 4000 were women and 3500 were children. The Broken Hill mine was the largest employer, with 3500 Africans in its employ, followed by the railway with 375 African workers. Other employers were the town's management board, the government and missions. The Europeans and Indians employed 1500 Africans as domestic workers, while Africans employed 140 fellow Africans as domestic works. There were independent workers like cobblers and beer brewers, among others. Out of the total population of all the men, slightly over 80 per cent were in employment.

It was government policy that all employers provide housing for their workers, hence a man's job went with residence. Thus, African residential areas included the mine compound and farms, government farms, railway plots, the town location where the town's management

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<sup>111</sup> See G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 1.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

board employees resided, and government farms. Others were Pullon's compound and Aerodrome compound<sup>113</sup>

On January 1 1938, Monica reported from the 'Great Northern Hotel, Box 81, Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia' that in the last week of December, she and her husband had trucked their car from Livingstone to Lusaka due to impassable roads. They had followed the car by train and drove to Broken Hill after a day's rest in Lusaka. They were in Broken Hill from early January to April, when they went back to Livingstone, where their first son Francis was born in May 1939. They were back in Broken Hill by early December 1939.<sup>114</sup>

By 26 January 1938, Godfrey's work was underway. We learn from Monica's letter to her father that 'both Bemba and Europeans were being cordial to him, and living in civilisation and getting about by car he does not feel it as tiring as country work.'<sup>115</sup> In fact, his work took him to different locations in Broken Hill where Africans lived. As Hansen notes, it is clear from the names of his informants that he only interviewed Bemba men. He did not acknowledge this in his *Essay*.<sup>116</sup>

### **Godfrey's Research Methodology at Broken Hill**

We are able to glimpse from his *Essay* and from his fieldnotes that Godfrey employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in his research. We also learn of details of his research from his notebooks in which he recorded detailed conversations with his informants. Monica's letters to her father further provide us with important details of his research. From Monica's correspondence with her father, we know, for example, that Godfrey did not need

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 18–21.

<sup>114</sup> BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, 28 March and 10 December 1939.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 26 January 1938.

<sup>116</sup> See Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting', 10.

‘collars’ at Broken Hill because he wore ‘Kakis’ every day. He ‘cruised around’ in his car and usually had to be ‘dug out by his friends’ in the rainy season.<sup>117</sup> All in all, Godfrey employed a combination of participant observation, interviews, and collection of statistics such as the census and, most importantly to this thesis, biographical sketches or life histories of his informants. As I narrate in the next chapter, Godfrey was assisted at Broken Hill by at least one assistant, Zacharia Mawere.

One of the chief research methodologies that Godfrey used at Broken Hill was the collection of statistical information such as the census with its expenditures of Africans in towns, number of people per household, and so on. This was in line with Godfrey’s view that his research was factual and it was also crucial to his research as it is from these statistics that he concluded what the levels of urbanisation were at Broken Hill. In one letter to her father Monica reports, ‘Godfrey is busy finding out facts... [H]e finds he needs a great deal of statistical data in town. Of course it’s slow work doing that.’<sup>118</sup> Zacharia Mawere assisted Godfrey collecting these statistics and census, as I demonstrate later.

True to his training under Malinowski and in line with the methodological approaches of functionalism, Godfrey employed participant observation in his research at Broken Hill. Popularised by Malinowski, participant observation involved an anthropologist’s immersion in the lives of his subjects in order to get a close understanding of their social systems and culture. Godfrey spent huge portions of his day in the African compounds ‘where many of his friends live[d]’.<sup>119</sup> His daily routine involved spending part of the day in the African residential areas and occasionally his informants visited him at home.<sup>120</sup> He also carried out

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<sup>117</sup> See BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, 8 May 1940.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 6 March 1939.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 26 January, 1938.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, Monica to her father, 20 March 1939.



observation in places patronised by Africans such as the market, the beer hall, a few dance competitions, marriage ceremonies, and so forth. As in Bunyakyusa, Godfrey became immersed in the masculine sociability of the migrant labourers at Broken Hill, smoking with them, a habit that the mining authorities and other Europeans found irksome and termed ‘fraternising with Africans’, as this ‘was letting down the prestige of the white man.’<sup>121</sup>

Godfrey’s research methodology was one of the reasons the colonial officials and mining companies had not wanted an anthropologist in their midst. Associating so closely with Africans was seen as unacceptable in the racially stratified Northern Rhodesia society. Additionally, his pacifist views contributed to the antagonism that Godfrey received from the mining companies. At a confidential meeting of the institute’s board of trustees in October 1940 it was made clear to Godfrey that ‘his position as a conscientious objector made it undesirable that he should be allowed access to large bodies of natives where an expression of his views might have a weakening influence on native morale and interfere with recruiting.’<sup>122</sup> Undoubtedly the panic that seized the mining companies and the colonial government in the wake of riots that occurred in the Copperbelt in 1940 as a result of African protests against poor working conditions, catalysed the reaction against Godfrey’s work. This caused the Broken Hill mine management to withdraw their permission for him to conduct work in their compounds. His position untenable, Godfrey tendered his resignation in May 1941.

Godfrey’s ‘chief research methodology’ at Broken Hill was ‘the biographical sketch or life history’.<sup>123</sup> This involved collecting and recording in-depth information about the ethnic

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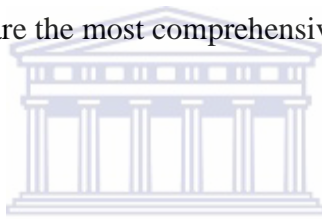
<sup>121</sup> M. Wilson, ‘First Three Years, 1938–41’, 279.

<sup>122</sup> National Archives of Zambia, Confidential minutes of 14th meeting, 27 October 1940 in B1/4/MISC/6/1 and B1/4/MISC/6/3. Quoted by Brown, ‘Anthropology and Colonial Rule’, 192.

<sup>123</sup> Hansen, ‘Urban Research in a Hostile Setting’, 11.

background, family history, employment history in town and economic status of individuals, focusing on wages and expenditure and, very significantly, their relations with their original homelands, which were measured by number of visits to the homeland as well as forms of financial and material support there.<sup>124</sup>

Precisely because of this focus on individuals and their life histories, Godfrey's fieldnotes contain extensive biographical information about his research assistant Zacharia Mawere as well many other key informants from the mine compound, the surrounding farms, railway compound and government farms.<sup>125</sup> Of these biographical sketches, those of Duncan Chanda, Mulenga Bisiketi, Laurenti Blani, Xavier Kofie, Morokeni Mumbi, K. Keala, and Julius and John Brown Kanjanja are the most comprehensive.<sup>126</sup> These sketches are recorded in Bemba.



As this chapter has shown, Godfrey Wilson's personality, engaged Christianity, and Marxist sympathies encouraged an egalitarian attitude towards his African informants. This coupled with his personal fieldwork style of total immersion into the masculine sociability of the male world of his informants enabled him to form close male bonds with his male informants.

While such immersion with African informants had worked well in Tanganyika, it proved to be problematic for Godfrey in the racially strained urban Northern Rhodesia. Godfrey had easy relationships with Africans. He smoked with them. He visited their homes. He received them in his home. He spoke their language. He was thus seen as a threat to the social barriers that defined relations between different races. While Godfrey's engaged research methodology of participant observation caused him to lose his permission to work with the

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>125</sup> BC880, E1.15 to E1.17 and E2 to E6.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

Africans by June 1940, it nevertheless allowed him to collect a rich body of data on African life at Broken Hill, including significantly detailed information about the life histories of hundreds of men there. It is to this body of extensive life histories that I now turn for the reconstruction of Zacharia's story and those of Xavier Kofie, Duncan Chanda and Mulenga Bisiketi.



## CHAPTER TWO

### **AMACHONA: XAVIER KOFIE AND THE MAKING OF AN URBANISED AFRICAN SUBJECT IN COLONIAL ZAMBIA**

The state of being a migrant can be defined in various ways. The hard-core migrant is the one whereby when he comes to town, he starts working, and then he hears that your father passed away, thereafter he hears that your mother passed away, and his siblings too and his grandmother and grandfather too, all his relatives, then he thinks, there is no one in the village to go back to. If he is not married, he then gets desperate and marries here in town, saying I don't have a wife in the village. I will never go back to the village, who will I go back to? I do not have a father, I lost my mother to death also, and my kin are all dead. So he cannot think about the village, no! He says I will die in town. He is a migrant.

Another kind of migrant is this one. A person comes from Bemba land, he comes here and then he cannot find a job. He moves from one place to another looking for a job. When he finally finds a job, he starts desiring clothes. Once he acquires the clothes he starts thinking of moving forward to another place. And then he reaches the place he desires. He gets tired of the new place, he then thinks of another place to go and he goes there. He eventually forgets the village, hence he stops writing letters there, and he says it's been long since I left the village. I am sure my parents are both dead. I will never go back to the village. He is a migrant; people in the village presume he is dead.

Another kind of migrant is this one. A person comes from the village and starts working. He begins frequently shopping, very expensive suits, he then starts to love beer and to dance, he doesn't save any money, no! He continues in these ways for many years, even when he receives letters from the village! Even when this guy works, and he desires to go home to the village, but he can't go, because he has no money for transport. This man has become a migrant.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> BC880, E1.8, Bemba notes, July–August 1938, for the original Bemba version. See also E2.1.8, Notes on Xavier Kofie for Godfrey's translation.

Xavier Kofie, Godfrey's language tutor and foremost informant in Northern Rhodesia, wrote 'Amachona', a three-page essay, in one of Godfrey Wilson's notebooks on 23 July 1939 in Livingstone.<sup>128</sup> Although poorly punctuated, the essay was written in well-spelt Bemba in a neat and clear handwriting. Xavier's description and analysis of *amachona* anticipates Godfrey's views on migrant laborers.

Godfrey's *Essay on the Economics of Detribalisation* cast Africans within the wider world economic system, arguing that the introduction of a capitalist system through mining and other colonial economic enterprises affected African societies by enabling a rural/urban separation. I see Godfrey's analysis in the essay and in his co-authored publication *The Analysis of Social Change* as, among other things, one of the foremost attempts to theorise the making of the colonial African subject through an analysis of how Western economic models shaped the subjectivities of the Africans, particularly in the urban centres.

In a decisive contribution to this post-colonial analysis of colonial rule, Mamdani has elaborated how colonial technologies of rule, embodied in the concept of indirect rule in British colonies, were employed to make the African a colonial subject through a process of 'define and rule'.<sup>129</sup> African tradition and custom, which until the advent of colonialism had been fluid, was now defined and fixed by European administrators. Indirect rule enabled a mode of governmentality that sought to 'define and manage difference', through the creation of difference. Identities were thus constructed along racial and tribal lines.<sup>130</sup> The African

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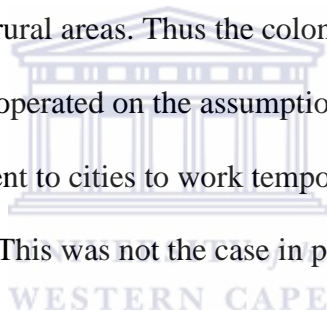
<sup>128</sup> *Amachona* is a Bemba word meaning one who has been away from home for a long time. It is a common term for migrant labourer, today associated with people in the diaspora for work or studies or any other reason. Godfrey translated the word as 'exile'.

<sup>129</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, 'Nativism: The Theory, Sir Henry Maine and the Post-1857 Crisis of Empire' in his *Define and Rule*, 7–8.

<sup>130</sup> Mamdani, 'Nativism', 46–9.

came to be seen as a native who was unchanging, bound by geography, custom and geography; the coloniser posited himself as the preserver of ageless African tradition.<sup>131</sup> But, as Mamdani argues, this conceptualisation and compartmentalisation of Africans worked to ‘shape the subjectivities of the entire colonised population’.<sup>132</sup>

According to Abdoumalig Simone, African cities in the colonial era were not designed for the benefit of Africans but as places to ‘organise the evacuation of resources and to construct mechanisms through which broader territories could be administered.’<sup>133</sup> In the case of Northern Rhodesia and Broken Hill, the male African was viewed as a provider of labour for the mining operations, one who did not have a stable place in the economic structures in town as he was expected to go back to rural areas. Thus the colonial government and mining companies in Northern Rhodesia operated on the assumption of a cyclical pattern of male African labour where Africans went to cities to work temporarily and went back to the rural areas to settle there permanently. This was not the case in practice.



Nevertheless, Africans reshaped their subjectivities through living in the city and making it their permanent residence, as Godfrey argued. By appropriating situations they found themselves in, Africans were able to form ‘alternative spaces of livelihood, relations and practices [that] had to be renegotiated continuously.’<sup>134</sup> Despite this agency on the part of Africans, the city remained a largely unstable place and the African its unstable subject. This is because the city often became a place where Africans enacted contradictory representations and aspirations. Through the life histories collected by Godfrey we see how the aspirations and ambitions of Africans shifted because of the ways wealth and prestige were seen within

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Abdoumalig Simone, ‘On the Worlding of African Cities’ in Geschiere, Meyer and Pels, eds., *Readings in Modernity*, 139–40.

<sup>134</sup> Simone, ‘On the Worlding of African Cities’, 137.

European systems of knowledge. Thus, for Africans like Xavier learning to speak English, and for Zacharia and the range of informants he interviewed, ordering clothes from European clothing companies loomed large among claims to prestige. It is these new aspirations the most important of which seems to have been ‘an intense desire for clothes’, which led to Godfrey’s observation that the Africans at Broken Hill were ‘not a cattle people, nor a goat people, nor a fishing people, nor a tree cutting people, they are a dressed people.’<sup>135</sup>

Similarly, Africans at Broken Hill appropriated aspects of African tradition. Aspects of traditional marriage were retained and synthesised with new practices. For example, kinship and relationship ties underwent major changes, cash became an important aspect of bride wealth, marriage rites and rituals were changed to make them appropriate to the city situations.<sup>136</sup> Ties with fellow kinsmen in urban areas took on new meaning and were extremely important to Africans. Godfrey’s interest in economic relations between relatives in urban centres, for example, demonstrated in the life histories narrated in this thesis; show how kinship ties were important for economic survival. Such ‘economics of kinship’ (as Godfrey termed them in his fieldnotes) took the form of pooling wages, pooling rations, keeping unemployed relatives, and sending money and gifts to rural homelands.<sup>137</sup> This synthesis of the traditional and the modern, Simone argues, were ways in which ‘residents from all walks of life ‘tried out’ different ways of being and doing things in the city – working out what were often contradictory needs and aspirations. There were places to ‘keep tradition alive’ and places to be a ‘kinsman’, and places to be a cosmopolitan urban ‘dweller’.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 39–42.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> For forms of gifts and percentages of wages taken to homelands, see G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 43–6; for economic practices such as pooling wages and food see G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 74–9.

<sup>138</sup> Simone, ‘On the Wording of African Cities’, 138.

These then are the general characteristics of *amachona*, men like Xavier, Zacharia and the range of informants that Godfrey worked with in Northern Rhodesia. Godfrey's fieldnotes show that they were aged between 20 and 30. In his published text, Godfrey's notes show that the average age of his migrant labourer informants was 24 years.<sup>139</sup>

In the rest of this chapter, I recover Xavier Kofie's life history and the nature of his relationship with the anthropologist, and examine the significance of his contribution to Godfrey's research.

Why should we take interest in the life of a hitherto unknown person? Firstly and in line with the general purposes of this study, I hope that a detailed narrative of Xavier's story may help illuminate how the history and experiences of Xavier as Godfrey's foremost informant shaped Godfrey's knowledge project, his later research at Broken Hill and his conclusion in the *Essay*. Secondly, I have always thought of this study as a narrative of 'subaltern' subjects in the history of anthropology. I therefore see the life history of Xavier as emblematic of African experiences and narratives at a particular point in time. In narrating the story it is not my intention to give Africans a voice but rather to 'stage them as agents in the process of history, to listen to their voices, to take their experiences and thought (and not just their material circumstances) seriously'.<sup>140</sup> It is within these frameworks that Stephen Clingman invites us to see biographical subjects 'as "laboratory specimens" for explaining complex social and historical issues in the intense and heightened focus of individual life.'<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Godfrey Wilson and Monica H. Wilson, *Analysis of Social Change*, 10 .

<sup>140</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts' in *Postcolonial Studies*, 1, 1 (1998), 21.

<sup>141</sup> Stephen Clingman, 'Biography and Representation: Some Analogies from Fiction', paper presented at the History Workshop Conference, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1987, 7.



## **Xavier Kofie's Life History and Working Relationship with Godfrey**

Xavier Kofie was the most important of Godfrey's informants because he was his initial language tutor and informant at Livingstone between July and September 1938.<sup>142</sup> During this time, there was a deep engagement between the two men that not only involved intense nearly daily language learning but in which Xavier informed Godfrey about general Bemba customs and etiquette. Xavier was also Godfrey's first informant about African urban life and labour migration. This was before Godfrey embarked on his Broken Hill research. Purely by coincidence the two men continued with their association at Broken Hill between January 1939 and April 1940.

Compared to the life histories that Godfrey and Zacharia collected at Broken Hill, Xavier's is more detailed, suggestive of a deeper level of intimacy and engagement between Godfrey and Xavier than with the other informants. Part of the reason for this difference is that the bigger chunk of Xavier's life history was collected between July and September 1938 in the more relaxed environment of Livingstone before Godfrey formally embarked on his Broken Hill research. Additionally, by 1940, when Godfrey collected biographical sketches at Broken Hill, Godfrey had developed his line of research which focused on the work histories of informants in urban areas as seen from a 1940 template of questions that concentrated on work histories, expenditure of wages, marriage processes and economic relations between informants and kinsmen in town and the countryside.<sup>143</sup> Consequently, the range of interactions between Godfrey and Xavier is much richer than that with other informants; his questions are certainly more open-ended than with informants at Broken Hill. Nevertheless, as I show in the conclusion to this thesis, all of the biographical sketches and life histories of

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<sup>142</sup> In the case studies I highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, language tutoring was done by assistants and not informants, but I feel the lines between informant and assistant are in some cases blurry, and this is so in Xavier's case. As a language tutor he was also an informant in that he provided information on various aspects of African life central to Godfrey's research.

<sup>143</sup> BC880, E9.15, Mine compound and mine work, List of questions to ask in interviews, 7 October 1940.

Godfrey's informants, including that of Xavier Kofie, are told as narratives of contact with Europeans, particularly in regard to the working lives of the subjects. I therefore suggest that the accounts of Godfrey's informants including those discussed here are emblematic of the life histories of the male migrant labourers. As such, I read these narratives as mediated life stories told within the context and influence of the prevailing racial relationship in the Northern Rhodesia of the time, and affected by the particular relations of power between a white anthropologist and his African informants, relationships affected by the dominant ideologies then.

### **Xavier Kofie's Personal Background**

Recorded in Godfrey's handwriting, Xavier's life history takes up an entire notebook.<sup>144</sup> It is a mark of Godfrey's linguistic prowess (and perhaps Xavier's teaching abilities) that just a few months after entering Northern Rhodesia he was able to record whole conversations in nearly perfect Bemba. As with the other notebooks, new words are underlined and translated on the adjacent page. During the interviews with Xavier, and unlike interviews with men at Broken Hill whom he interviewed later, it is clear that he is writing deliberately (and thankfully clearly), perhaps indicating that he is still not totally confident of his Bemba. In the particular notebook on Xavier's life history, on the next page after the astute '*Amachona*' essay, Godfrey begins the record of Xavier's life history, indicating that it is 'taken by me by dictation'<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> For Xavier's biographical details, see BC880, E1.8, Bemba notes, July–August 1938; a few parts of these notes are also transcribed and indexed under E2.1.8, Notes on Xavier Kofie. For details on later discussions between Godfrey and Xavier between 1939 and 1940 at Broken Hill, see BC 880, E2.1.3, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men III. Xavier also reflects on several lists of married men interviewed in the mine compound, see for example BC880, E2.1.1, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men I, which includes a list of men interviewed.

<sup>145</sup> BC880, Bemba notes, July–August 1938.

Xavier Kofie was born in 1916 at Masongo Village in Bembaland, in an area between Kasama and Mpika. Xavier's father's first wife had died leaving a female child. Kofie senior then took another wife with whom he had four children, two girls and two boys. Xavier was the first of these four children. Xavier's father was a carpenter working for the government in Bembaland, a position which at the time was prestigious. Before his birth, Xavier says, his father in the company of an elder brother had travelled from Mpika to Serenje in search of work. After a short stint at Serenje, the elder brother died after a stay in a hospital. At the advice of a European called Bwana Moffat, Kofie Senior went to Livingstonia Mission in Blantyre to learn carpentry. Bwana Moffat was actually Malcolm Moffat, David Livingstone's nephew and Robert Moffat's grandson.<sup>146</sup> In 1908, under the Free Church of Scotland, Moffat and his wife Maria established a mission station at Chitambo, a district in North-eastern Zambia, where David Livingstone died. During his carpentry training, Kofie Senior was converted and baptised into the Free Church of Scotland. On completing his training, Kofie Senior seems to have worked for Moffat for some time, returning to Kasama and later to Mpika to take up government employment, working under a European identified only as Bwana Simpson. In 1920, Xavier says, his father was transferred to Kasama and moved there with his family. After a short stint at Kasama, Kofie Senior was again transferred to Shiwa Ng'andu, a well-known estate belonging to Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Gore Brown (1883–1967).<sup>147</sup> In 1922, when Xavier was six years old, the family moved back

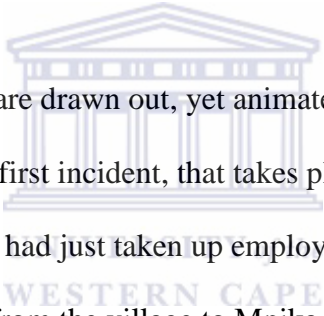
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<sup>146</sup> The Moffats were descendants of Dr Livingstone's wife's family from South Africa. They established several mission stations in Zambia, the most famous of which is the mission at Chitambo Serenje, where David Livingstone died. To date, the mission station survives together with an adjacent primary teacher college called Malcolm Moffat. See Marion A. Currie, *Livingstone's Hospital: The Story of Chitambo* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2011) and Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology*, 59.

<sup>147</sup> Shiwa Ng'andu is a manor house that was built by Lieutenant Colonel Sir Stewart Gore Brown (1883–1967). Located 100 kilometres from Mpika to the south and 175 kilometres northwest of Kasama, the manor house has come to signify the heritage of white settlement in colonial Zambia. Gore Brown fought in the First World War on the Western front and returned to Northern Rhodesia to settle there. He was a liberal and was elected to the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council in 1935, where he openly supported the advancement of Africans in terms of access to education and denunciation of the colour bar and right to vote, among other things. He was a keen opposer of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, supported the establishment of African

to Mpika. At the time of the interview in 1938, Kofie Senior was still working for the government office at Mpika.

Despite his father belonging to the Free Church of Scotland, Xavier, his mother and the three sisters were baptised into the Roman Catholic Church, to which they were admitted after taking baptismal lessons. Xavier's rural upbringing is clear in the way he narrates his stories, which are punctuated by a marked African indigeneity. At Godfrey's prompting to narrate his pre-schooling years, Xavier responds that he only remembered 'a few significant events'. It is instructive that of the very few significant events that he narrates, two involve encounters with lions and two with Europeans.



The first two childhood incidents are drawn out, yet animated, narratives of two separate encounters involving lions. In the first incident, that takes place around 1919 when Xavier was just three years old, his father had just taken up employment at Mpika, taking with him the young Xavier and his mother from the village to Mpika *boma*. About three months after the arrival in Mpika, a lion attacked the homestead where Xavier's family were staying with at least two other African families. After killing a boy, the lion was shot at by a neighbour and died the following morning. Xavier emphasises here that despite shooting at the lion severely, the neighbour missed the lion. In the second incident with the lion, which seems to have taken place at least three years after the first lion incident, another lion attacked the village, killing its headman.

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politics, and is among the few whites that publicly championed for Northern Rhodesia's independence from white rule. In the 1962 election that ushered in Zambia's first African prime minister and later president, Gore Brown stood for Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party but lost. He died at Kasama in 1967 and was buried at Shiwa Ng'andu, receiving a state funeral that no other white person has yet been accorded in Zambia. See Robert I. Rothberg, *Black Heart: Gore Brown and the Politics of Multiracial in Zambia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977),

The last of these 'significant' events is instructive of the earliest encounters between Africans and Europeans. It is also the first encounter that the young Xavier, aged only eight, had with European justice – two strokes of the cane at the hand of the bwana, the district commissioner of Mpika. He narrates, with the flair and love of detail of a good storyteller, the unfortunate but exciting incident that led to this fateful encounter.

One day I went with my friends to play at Europeans. We took eggs and oil, flour and sugar with us. We went to a place near the golf course on top of the hill where there was thick grass in which we were accustomed to hide from the messengers, for they beat us if we played in the golf course. Now, at the foot of the hill was a huge cattle kraal belonging to the boma, it was built of mud bricks but roofed with thatch. So when we had reached our chosen spot, we lighted a fire and began to cook the food which we had brought. And then one of us was chosen to act the part of bwana, another that of cook, another that of pantry boy, yet another that of dishwasher, one more was chosen to be the scrubber of pots (Godfrey's translation does not record this tasks), I was chosen as the cutter (Godfrey says table attendant). The one to whom we gave the part of bwana was of course the biggest. So then, he sat on top of a big rock, while the cook cooked some more food. At that moment we heard the midday bell. So thinking that the messengers were going home, we heaped more firewood on the fire (Godfrey says 'fuel' instead of 'firewood'). As soon as we did this, the fire began to spread to the grass, and we soon realized the fire would soon be an inferno. We tried to put out the fire but it refused. We immediately realized that the fire was headed for the kraal. We heard the bell again summoning the messengers and everyone else, for the bell ringer thought the kraal was already on fire. The bwana came running, the store keepers, the brick makers, everybody!

We ran away, for we expected to be thoroughly thrashed. Leaving the fire just as it was getting near the kraal. The messengers saw us running across the golf course but paid us no heed, they heeded only the cattle kraal, but they knew it was we who had set the grass on fire. Then they beat out the fire until it was extinguished, even the bwana picked up branches and beat with the rest, we had run to the village of Johan my friend.

We did not go back, no! We were afraid of being beaten, and we thought that if we spent at least two days at our friends, all would be forgotten. And so when two days had passed we went to the hill to look for gum and after to the garden to snare birds, and there the workers in the garden saw us! And they went to tell the messengers that we children had come back and were snaring birds in the garden. The messengers came running to catch us, and we saw them

coming across the golf course, and we fled, leaving our birds. But they ran after us and caught us and took us to the bwana, where the bwana gave us two strokes each and let us go. We went back home. And a fortnight later my father sent me to Chilonga and from there my father sent me to Chilubula. This was 1924.<sup>148</sup>

Between October 1924 and 1926 Xavier and an undisclosed number of friends went to Chilubula. The boys attended school at three mission stations, namely, Chilubula, Malole where they spent six months, and Kaputa where they spent ten months. Chilubula, Chilonga and Kaputa are three of the mission stations established in the late nineteenth century in Bembaland. From the late 1800s Bembaland saw a number of Catholic and Protestant mission stations set up. The pioneering Catholic missionary in Bembaland was Joseph Dupont, a French priest who set up mission stations in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia in the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century as a member of the Missionaries of Africa. Chilubula, located in the heart of Bembaland, was set up as the focal point and catechist training centre for the Catholic Church in Northeastern Rhodesia.<sup>149</sup> Xavier narrates that he spent two years at the 'small' seminary at Chilubula and then joined the major seminary at around age twelve, where he spent the next five years training for priesthood until his parents demanded his release.

Life at the seminary was a harsh departure from the life of seeming abandon that Xavier had had in his childhood. The routine was strict and the priests ensured that the boys were separated from what they must have perceived as the negative influences of African life and culture. On entering the seminary, the boys were issued with various provisions including one

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<sup>148</sup> See BC880, E2.1.8, Notes on Xavier Kofie, for Godfrey's translated English version.

<sup>149</sup> For an abridged version of this history see [http://www.dacb.org/stories/zambia/dupont\\_joseph.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/zambia/dupont_joseph.html), accessed 21 March 2015. For details see Andrew Roberts, *A History of the Bemba: Political Growth and Change in North-Eastern Zambia Before 1900* (London: Longman, 1973).

pair of khaki shorts and matching shirt, two pieces of clothing to wear to bed and four blankets. Each boy was allocated a bed. All the boys slept in one big dormitory.

The routine in the seminary was strict and well ordered. The rising bell went off at 6 a.m. every morning. The young seminarians had exactly 30 minutes to bath. Prayer was from 6:30 to 7:30, after which rice was served for breakfast at 7:30. School started at eight o'clock and recessed for football from 10:30 to 11:30, after which the boys went to class for 30 minutes before proceeding to a lunch of *nshima* (maize meal). It is not clear exactly what subjects were taught but Latin was one of them.<sup>150</sup> At 1 p.m. the boys were allowed to go to the river to swim for 45 minutes, followed by afternoon classes from 2 p.m. to 4. After class, each boy proceeded to work in the garden, where each maintained a portion. The only variation to this daily weekday's routine was on Thursdays, when there was no afternoon programme and the boys were allowed to go and play in the bush, accompanied by a priest or two. On Saturday the boys did not attend class but worked at Africanising the Catholic songs and liturgy through practising beating drums for the mass. On Sunday, mass was at 9 a.m. and was followed by lunch. Sunday lunch was accompanied by various activities such as playing the piano, football, swimming in a nearby stream, carpentry training and bird hunting.

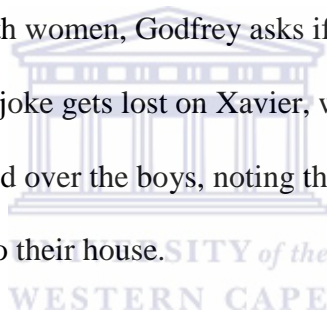
As he describes the location and setup of the seminary, Xavier's narrative takes on a sombre note. The seminary was set in an isolated area within three kilometres of Chilubula Mission. A tall wall fence ensured the privacy of the seminary. Only two women from a nearby village were allowed access to cook food for the establishment. Two other young men frequently came in to do house chores for the priests. The people from the nearby village called the seminary 'the bishop's village'. The priests lived about '500 yards' from the boy's dormitory

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<sup>150</sup> See BC880, E1.4, Notes containing Chibemba vocabulary, just before the entry for 16 July.

(the length of three houses to be exact, according to Xavier; the '500 yards' is Godfrey's interpretation). The priest's house was called 'Bishop's house' or 'Bishop's residence'.

Visitors including the boys' families were not allowed in the seminary nor were the boys allowed to set foot outside the walls of the seminary save for the scheduled trips on Thursday or Sundays, when they were allowed to go swimming or bird hunting. During these trips they were accompanied by one or two priests. In response to Godfrey's question about why the priests imposed such restrictions, Xavier responds that this was because the priests feared that the boys would be influenced by what were perceived as negative influences from the African villagers and also to prevent relations with women. Rather naughtily and in apparent response to the part restricting relations with women, Godfrey asks if Xavier and his friends ever sneaked out of the seminary. The joke gets lost on Xavier, who in response emphasises the extent to which the priests watched over the boys, noting that the priests even ensured the boys were in bed before retiring to their house.



Despite this sombre reality, Xavier clearly felt privileged to have been in the seminary, and recalls with bitterness how grieved he was when he was 17 and his parents, who had not seen him for five years, turned up at the door of the seminary demanding his release. After a strong argument between the priests and Kofie Senior, the priests relented and released Xavier the following week.

For young African men, the priesthood represented the new aspirations of fame and wealth embodied in new Westernised forms of prestige, as reflected in the conversation below:

Xavier: The young men want to be priests so that they can work for God and have a mission station built for them. A few who are very intelligent become bishops. After being bishops for



three years, many are sent to meet the pope, to tell the pope that these are the black people from Africa we have trained as priests.

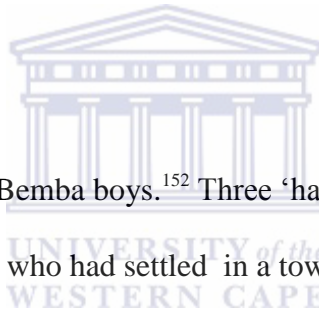
Godfrey: Did you agree to leave the seminary?

Xavier: No! I was very grieved. Because if I had stayed in the seminary I would have been a rich man by now.

Godfrey: How would you have been that?

Xavier: Having riches and been respected by white men, but it wouldn't have been my individual wealth, no!<sup>151</sup>

On leaving the seminary, Xavier went to join his parents at Mpika, where he stayed for four weeks. The studious Kofie Senior had already made plans for the continuing education of his son, calling on Mr Moffat at Chitambo to admit Xavier to school there. Mr Moffat was agreeable to the idea and arranged for a Mr Harvey, who was passing through Mpika, to pick up Xavier in a motorcar.



At Chitambo there were 10 other Bemba boys.<sup>152</sup> Three ‘half-castes’ – the children of Cirupula, the famous white settler who had settled in a town called Mkush near Broken Hill, marrying two African women – were also students at the school. The Wilsons were later scorned by fellow Europeans at Broken Hill for associating with Cirupula, who was labelled a *negrophile*.<sup>153</sup> Xavier was admitted to Standard Two, paying two pounds ten shillings per year, which must have been a rude shock after the free schooling in the seminary. Unlike the seminary’s system, the boarders were asked to provide their own provisions such as clothes and bedding. At Chitambo each African student was given a monthly allowance of two shillings and six pence in lieu of food. The year at Chitambo was punctuated by hunger,

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<sup>151</sup> My translation. Godfrey did not translate the entire life history, only portions of it.

<sup>152</sup> According to Currie, by 1908 the main mission at Chitambo had 120 pupils and five teachers. By 1914 there were a number of schools that the Moffats had established in Chitambo district. Most of these schools seem to have been outposts as the villages were scattered far and wide. See Currie, *Livingstone’s Hospital*, 60.

<sup>153</sup> M. Wilson, ‘First Three Years, 1938–41’, 279.

which led to many boys running away.<sup>154</sup> The routine was similar to that of the seminary but more relaxed. School started at 8 a.m., with a break at 11. Classes ended at 12. At 2 p.m. the boys did manual work such as cutting down trees, gardening and working the fields. The day ended at 5, when the boys went back to their residences to bath, cook and pursue their own activities. They were allowed to go to the nearby villages as they had to scout for their own food.

When Xavier was in Standard Three between 1930 and 1932, the inspector of schools, a Bwana Miller, visited Chitambo and administered a test to the pupils. Bwana Miller was in fact Douglas Miller, part of the Northern Rhodesian ‘official fauna’ that Audrey Richards had given Godfrey some pointers on, in an entertainingly gossipy 1937 letter.<sup>155</sup> He was the education officer of Kasama, ‘a young man and worked with B.M. [Bronislaw Malinowski] at the school [LSE?].’<sup>156</sup> Audrey advised Godfrey to write to Miller, requesting to work with him. Xavier and three other Bemba boys evidently passed the exam, enabling their progression to the prestigious Lubwa Mission in Chinsali.<sup>157</sup> Lubwa was an extension of the Livingstonia Mission and was founded in 1905 by David Kaunda, the father of Zambia’s first president, who had been ordained together with Malcolm Moffat.

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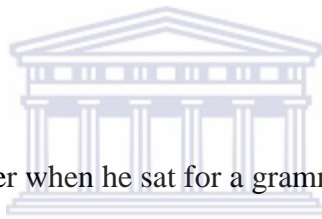
<sup>154</sup> Currie cites lack of food as one of the problems in the early years of establishing the mission station: Currie, *Livingstone’s Hospital*, 62.

<sup>155</sup> BC 880, B4.7, Correspondence, letters to and from Audrey Richards, 28 September 1937.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> It is interesting that, on his voyage from England to South Africa in July 1934, Godfrey had travelled and had discussions with a European missionary couple from Lubwa, D. Maxwell Robertson and Ms Robertson: See BC880, A1.5, Diary, 1934–1935. Lubwa was the second station to be established by the Free Church of Scotland in Northern Rhodesia after Mwenzo Mission, and was an outstation of the Livingstonia Mission of Nyasaland. David Kaunda was tasked to establish a mission station among the Bemba. The mission is in fact the birthplace of Zambia’s nationalist movement as it is here that the first Welfare Society that paved the way for African political parties was established, mostly by educated African elite. Lubwa’s alumni include the first president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, first vice-president and radical politician Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe and a host of other liberation heroes that came to make up Zambia’s first cabinet at Independence. See for example A. Ipenburg, *‘All Good Men’: The Development of Lubwa Mission, Chinsali, Zambia, 1905–1967* (Boston: Boston University African Studies Centre, 1996).

There were either no dwelling shelters or not enough of them for boarders at Lubwa, and so the students had to build their own dwellings. They attended class in the morning and spent the afternoons cutting wood, poles and grass for the construction. After the constructions were done, they continued to attend class in the morning and the afternoons were spent on different activities like pathfinder activities, carpentry lessons and even typing lessons. On Saturday the students played football in the mornings after which they were allowed to do what they wanted, like washing their clothes. Sunday morning was reserved for worship and the afternoons were spent hunting. Lubwa was a place of plenty compared to Chitambo. The students were issued with free clothes comprising two shorts and two shirts as well as two blankets per year. They had plentiful meals prepared by the school, which were taken in the school dining hall.



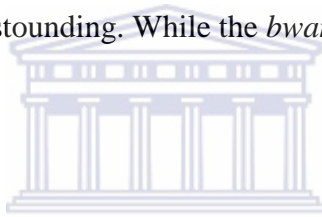
At Lubwa, Xavier again met Miller when he sat for a grammar examination which saw him qualify for Standard Four. Unfortunately this was the end of Xavier's schooling career. After the examination and before progressing to Kasama for Standard Four, Xavier was allowed to go home to visit his family. It was during this holiday that a white man from Mazabuka, Bwana Allen, who worked at a locust control research centre in Mazabuka, a town near Livingstone, offered Xavier the job of typist. Against the advice of his father and to the annoyance of Miller and Harvey at Serenje and Moffat at Chitambo, Xavier took the job and left Mpika for Mazabuka. It was the first time Xavier was leaving the Northern Province. His father, grandmother and sisters went to the *boma* to see him off.

### ***Xavier's Working Life as a Migrant Labourer***

I took the detail with which Xavier narrates this journey to be indicative of the importance that it represented in his life. He was leaving the familiarity of his missionary schooling and

village for employment in a town that was far from his homeland. He must have been experiencing a real sense of independence for the first time in his life. For sure, there were many surprises waiting for him on the long trip. He was to have his first view of a train, have his first encounter with Nyanja, a language only next to Bemba as the lingua franca in towns, he was to stay among non-Bemba for the first time and get a rude taste of working for Europeans other than the missionaries he was used to.

After a trip punctuated by stoppages at various places of Europeans such as Harvey at Serenje, Moffat at Chitambo, Cirupula at Mkushi, and at least three burst tyres, Xavier describes reaching Kapiri Mposhi, a town just about fifty kilometres from Broken Hill. The brilliant lights of the town were astounding. While the *bwana* spent the night in the hotel, Xavier spent his in the car.



In the early hours of the morning, Xavier woke up to a strange loud whistle-like noise. He quickly rushed to see the hotel's African guard, asking where the disturbing noise was coming from. It was the train! Xavier quickly climbed on top of the car to get a better view. It looked totally different from the pictures in the books! It had one huge light instead of two like the motorcar. En route to Broken Hill, Xavier had another sighting of the train which was headed to the Copperbelt, asking Bwana Allen to stop so he could get a better view.

More surprises awaited him in Broken Hill. When they reached the town, African traders came over and greeted them in a strange tongue: '*Moni!*' they said. Xavier refrained from responding, lest they were being rude to him. They proceeded to Lusaka, spending the night at a veterinary doctor's house and reaching Mazabuka the following afternoon. The year was 1932.

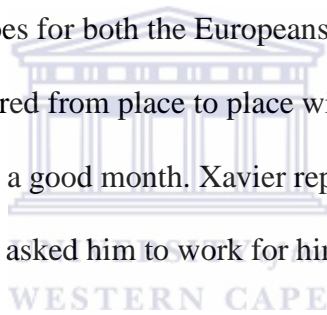
In Mazabuka, Xavier worked at the research station doing various jobs. These involved locust collection and documentation and typing. He earned one pound per month. Rations and board were also provided. He lived in an inter-ethnic compound, where he met people from other ethnic groups whom he felt were uncultured, rowdy and quarrelsome. He stayed out of their way, and only associated with the few Bemba he could find in Mazabuka. Xavier pooled his monthly rations with another Bemba, Yolam Katongo, who was working for a Mr Hart. Xavier was in Mazabuka from 1932 to 1934.

The circumstances leading to his leaving Mazabuka were unfortunate, highlighting the difficulties that African migrant labourers faced as a result of racism. Sometime in 1934 Allen left for Kalomo, a neighbouring district, to study locusts there. He left Xavier in the care of another European, who was a cotton farmer among other things. The working conditions at the new place were harsh. The African workers started work very early in the morning preparing the land, knocking off only at 8 p.m. At that time, Xavier says, the new boss told the rest of the workers to knock off while Xavier was asked to remain behind doing clerical work – recording activities of the day and writing out receipts. After this, Xavier would go and verify the work done, coming back after midnight.

One Sunday morning Xavier reported late for work and was left behind when others were driven in the motorcar. He walked to the worksite but still arrived late. On payday, the employer decided to deduct two shillings from Xavier's pay, to which Xavier protested, saying he was only late and never missed work, and that it was a Sunday when they were not supposed to work. On hearing Xavier's protest the European got upset and beat Xavier. This did not go well with Xavier, who decided to boycott work and wait for Allen. When Allen

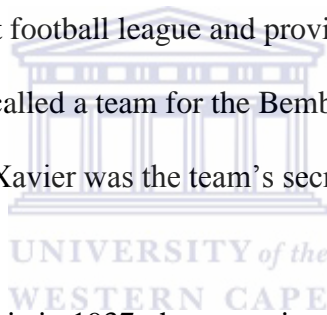
finally came, Xavier complained about the beating, explaining that his only crime was that he was late only once and on a Sunday too when they were not supposed to work. Allen appealed to the other European but to no avail.

Xavier left the research station in 1934, and went straight to Mazabuka *boma*. There he found a European who was a shoe repairer and asked to be an apprentice so that he could learn to repair shoes. Xavier paid two shillings to learn the trade. While Xavier was apprenticing, he was not getting any pay but was provided with food. After six months, the white man closed shop and shifted to Durban while Xavier headed for Lusaka on a train, where he started repairing shoes. The cost of the train ticket was three shillings and three pence. In Lusaka, Xavier worked solo, repairing shoes for both the Europeans and Africans. He did not have a fixed place of business but wandered from place to place within Lusaka. Xavier saved his money, as much as 10 shillings in a good month. Xavier repaired shoes from 1934 to 1936 until a white man came along and asked him to work for him.



His new job was that of a court messenger, delivering letters from and to the court. He was paid 30 shillings per month. After six months on the job Xavier resigned to go to Wankie. He had gotten an invitation and train fare from a fellow Bemba at Wankie to go there and assist in playing competitive football. It seems his reputation as a good football player had preceded him. At hearing of the decision to resign his job as messenger, Godfrey expressed surprise that he had given up his job so easily. Xavier admonishes him strongly. ‘Do not be too surprised at my decision to stop work, no! I used to walk about too much, my feet used to pain a lot! Sometimes when I got too tired, I used to sleep wherever I was, even in the bush, far away from people.’

Actually, Xavier's interest in football started in his young school days at Kaputa, Chilubula, Chitambo and Lubwa. In 1925 aged just nine, when he first started formal schooling at Kaputa, the school extra curriculum activities involved football, which was played among the pupils. This practice continued throughout his stay at Chilubula. At Lubwa, where Xavier went in his late teens, he played a lot of football with teams from other places like Malole. When Xavier reached Mazabuka he played for Nakambala Football Club, which is still there today. In Lusaka, Xavier did not join a football team despite the fact that there were many to choose from. In 1935 Xavier and some undisclosed partners started their own football team for youngsters. He had the team registered at Lusaka *boma*. The team was called Elephant Tanganyika. The district commissioner for Lusaka, Bwana Danny, suggested that the team be adopted as part of the government football league and provided the team with playing grounds. Although the team was called a team for the Bemba, Xavier says that it was actually multi-ethnic. From its inception, Xavier was the team's secretary.



When Xavier returned from Wankie in 1937, the same time when Godfrey was preparing to leave Tanganyika, he went straight to Livingstone. Xavier stayed with a cousin (the son of his father's sister) for two weeks. In Livingstone he found a job as an orderly at a mission hospital, a job which he held for six months. Then the priests requested that he leave his job as orderly and take on a teaching position at a primary school. At the time of Xavier and Godfrey's association in July 1938, he was still teaching there. He was unmarried, which led Godfrey to mock Xavier, telling him that he was old enough to have a wife.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> BC880, E1.4, Notes containing Chibemba vocabulary, Godfrey's conversation with Xavier, July 1938.

### *Xavier Kofie at Broken Hill*

I was surprised when I came across Xavier's name on a list of married men that Godfrey interviewed at Broken Hill in 1939. It was the same Xavier Kofie, now in Broken Hill, working in the mine compound and married to Dinah, a coloured girl. There were no fewer than three interviews between Godfrey and Xavier between January 1939 and 1940.<sup>159</sup> The first took place on 27 January 1939, in mine compound hut number 448, which Godfrey indicates is Xavier's hut. He was working in the mine compound office, earning one pound a month plus food and lodging.

Xavier had been called to Broken Hill by his father Kofie Senior, who travelled from Mpika to Broken Hill to follow up on Xavier's sisters who were by then living there. In August 1938, Kofie Senior had written to his son telling him he would come to Broken Hill. Xavier moved there on 7 November 1939 and started work in the mine as a clerk on 25 November.

His father arrived in August 1938 to visit Xavier's sisters, one of whom was by then married to one Raphael Chisanga, who also came from Bembaland and was known to the Kofie family. Chisanga, Xavier's brother-in-law, was at this time working as a washing boy at a hotel. In Broken Hill Kofie Senior took a job at Heslop's butcher shop, from which he intended to raise money to pay his cattle herders back in Mpika.

At the time of his stay in Broken Hill, Xavier was keeping a 'classificatory brother' by the name of George Mulenga, who had been working in Lusaka as the office boy of a Dr. Haslain

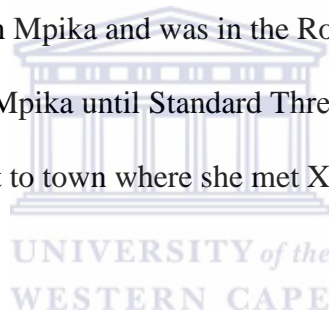
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<sup>159</sup> Interviews took place on 27 January 1939 in Xavier's hut, later interviews were on 7 February, another interview on 27 February, and yet another interview is recorded on 7 March 1940 in the mine compound, this time in hut number 17. See BC880, E2, Outline biographies of married men in the mine compound, February 1939 – May 1940; E2.1.1, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men I includes the list of men interviewed; E2.1.2, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men II; E2.1.3, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men III.



but left his job when he heard that Xavier was headed to Kabwe and followed him. Godfrey, as usual, is struck by the ease with which Africans seemed to have left jobs and asked Xavier, 'Did he leave his job because he was tired?' Xavier responds, 'Because he heard I had passed by Lusaka and he followed me here.' George, Xavier's 'young brother', stayed with Xavier until around early February 1939 when he got a job at the aerodrome and found accommodation there. His salary at the aerodrome was fifteen shillings.

On Saturday 4 March 1938, Xavier married a 'half caste' named Dinah.<sup>160</sup> Dinah was the unacknowledged daughter of a German man named Brigham from Livingstone and a Bemba woman. Xavier did not know her age, but tells Godfrey that she had had her first menstruation in 1938, was born in Mpika and was in the Roman Catholic baptismal class. Dinah had received education in Mpika until Standard Three. Dinah's school fees had been taken care of by an aunt. Her visit to town where she met Xavier was her first to an urban area.



This marriage did not last, however, due to the fact that African marriages at Broken Hill were generally unstable, a theme Godfrey takes up in the *Essay*, Part II.<sup>161</sup> We get the first hint of Xavier's marital problems in a conversation with Godfrey. At the beginning of the interview Godfrey records '[Xavier] Came into Chanda's hut to greet me.' In this interview Godfrey asks Xavier after Dinah and Xavier 'anxiously' relates some marital problems to Godfrey, informing Godfrey that he had given Dinah a 'suspension' of three months, to stay with her relative. In a later interview with a man named Enoch on 24 April 1940, Godfrey records, 'Told me that X. Kofie and Dinah were divorced, she was living with her mother'.

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<sup>160</sup> BC 880, E2, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men in the mine compound, February 1939 – May 1940. We learn this date in an interview on 27 February 1939, when Xavier informs Godfrey that the wedding was set for Saturday 4 March 1939.

<sup>161</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 39–69.

This is the last that we hear of Xavier's wife. In fact, divorce and having multiple partners seem to have been among the social problems in Broken Hill, as we saw earlier from Zacharia's research. Godfrey, in Part II of the *Essay*, also noted that the lack of African women in Broken Hill, prompted by the disproportion between men and women, caused 'sexual rivalry among Africans' and high levels of divorce.<sup>162</sup>

### **Xavier Kofie: Language Tutor and Foremost Informant**

Xavier was Godfrey's Bemba language tutor in Livingstone between July and August 1938. Godfrey records Xavier's detailed life history up to 1938 in Livingstone between July and August 1938, when Xavier had been working as a primary school teacher in Livingstone. By pure coincidence, Xavier and Godfrey met again in Broken Hill in January 1939, where Xavier had taken up employment at Broken Hill mine. Godfrey recorded at least four more conversations with Xavier between January 1939 and April 1940. Characteristically, Godfrey's fieldnotes of his discussions with Xavier are rich, detailed and full of life. He not only records the 'formal' sessions, but includes conversations that have nothing to do with the 'business' at hand. His notes are not descriptive. The conversations with Xavier are liberally punctuated with exclamation marks, giving a sense of heated discussion. Godfrey records the time and place of each conversation. These elements provide significant insights into the contexts in which the conversations are held and, above all, provide a glimpse into the relationship between Godfrey and Xavier in the field.

Like Godfrey, Xavier was extremely extroverted and opinionated. He had had contact with Europeans from a very young age, had worked in various capacities with Europeans, and had a very good education, though he was eight years younger than Godfrey. These factors,

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<sup>162</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 20–1. While there were 7,500 men at Broken Hill, there were only 3,500 women. Of the total of 3000 married men only 40% had their wives with them in Broken Hill.

combined, made for an interesting and easy rapport between the two men, influencing significantly Xavier's relationship with Godfrey and his role as Godfrey's chief informant before Godfrey started his research at Broken Hill.

### **Language learning**

Godfrey and Xavier must have met in Livingstone between May and July 1938. It is not clear how and under what circumstances Xavier became Godfrey's language tutor and informant. Xavier is not mentioned by Monica in her letters to her father or by Godfrey in his to Audrey Richards.

Xavier started teaching Godfrey Bemba in July. Given the progress he makes within that first month, Xavier must have been a good teacher. Xavier's own European education and his history of interactions with Europeans no doubt helped to smooth things.

There are three notebooks recorded between July 1938 and August 1938, when Xavier was Godfrey's language tutor.<sup>163</sup> From the notes it is clear that they met every day. This is indicated by conversations at the start and end of sessions. In some instances there is reference to the previous day's discussion. More tellingly, many conversations end by either party stating that such or such a topic would be discussed the following day, or end with promises to meet the following day.

The language learning started with basic words such as verbs and nouns. Long lists of words then appear, related to different things without much discernible pattern. Godfrey calls these his Bemba reader or dictionary. In one entry which Godfrey records both in Bemba and

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<sup>163</sup> See BC 880, E.1.1–E1.7, Notebooks containing Chibemba vocabulary; E1.8, Bemba notes, July–August 1938.

English, he tells Xavier, ‘I want you to help me with verbal distinction (noun verb)’. The entries that follow are detailed records of uses of verbs, present tense, past tense and present perfect tenses, as in ‘work, working, was working, will work among others’. Here also is recorded ‘exercises in tenses’, with a number of tenses such as ‘*ukukaka*: tie, *ukwisa*: come, *ukuya*:go, *ukufwaya*: want, *ukumona*: see’. These are then written in their various tenses and sentences are used to learn how to use the words in various tenses.

An interesting step that the language learning took was practice in how not only to pronounce words but how the pronunciation changes situationally. This was an important aspect especially given that Bemba is phonetically complex and the pronunciation varies significantly according to the tense, to the relationship between the people in conversation (old/young), and whether words are spoken in the plural or singular. It may also change depending on what word follows that particular word. Hence Godfrey’s notes here have detailed linguistic symbols on how to pronounce words according to their arrangement in a sentence. For example, when saying *leta* (bring), the ending changes to ‘e’ if the next word starts with a vowel, thus *letainsalu* (bring a cloth) is pronounced as *lete-insalu*. Similarly Godfrey noted that ‘a + o’ in a word translates into ‘o’, for example.

Xavier’s language teaching also highlighted variations between written forms and pronunciations, especially when considered against the standardisation of the written form by Europeans. For example, many Europeans including Godfrey dropped the ‘h’ in words like *chikanda* (a plant food) or Chanda (a common Bemba name). Thus Godfrey writes Chanda as Canda.

Language learning was also used to learn Bemba etiquette, culture and history. There are sessions on different forms of greetings for general and specific situations. There are sessions on various forms of address for people with specific relationships, such as seniors, peers and in-laws.

Topical conversations are used to learn the language and also about Bemba culture and African life in general. These discussions include land rights, marriage rites, cultivation, nutrition, *chitemene* (an agricultural method where trees are cut and burnt to fertilise the soil) and family relations. Additionally, Godfrey uses routine conversations as opportunities to learn the language. For example, an entry where Xavier comes in and asks if he should close the door is applied to etiquette and language when one visits. Hence, language learning follows on how to say close the door, leave the door open, come in, and sit down. In another entry, Xavier starts the conversation by complaining about the hot weather. This opens up learning about how to say it is cold, windy, dusty, and so on. In another instance the conversation goes:

Godfrey: Were you sick?  
Xavier: Yes I was sick.  
Godfrey: What were you sick of?  
Xavier: Headache and stomach.  
Godfrey: Are you now at peace/better?  
Xavier: Yes much.  
Godfrey: I am happy /I am joyful.

This conversation is used to learn how to enquire after health and show sympathy when someone is ill. Bemba letter writing etiquette also formed part of Godfrey's curriculum.

By 20 July, just under a month after Xavier and Godfrey begin their language learning, the indications are that the two had got comfortable enough to discuss intimate matters.

Reflecting the immersion in male masculinities that Marsland observes of Godfrey's Bunyakyusa research, here the language learning gets interesting as seen from these entries: *ukutomba*: to have sexual intercourse, *ukukanda*: to copulate (male), *ukukandwa*: to copulate (female), *kalingilingi*: clitoris, *nyo*: vagina, *ukukuna*: to stretch lips of vagina, *imfwalo*: male genitals, *matope*: female sex fluids, *icikala*: penis, *amatole*: testicles, *amaso*: pubic hair.<sup>164</sup> Conversations on sex and childbearing also come up after September while Godfrey is in Kasama.<sup>165</sup>

While such masculine discussions must have helped to bridge the gap across culture and language, communication across them still had perils, making for interesting exchanges. Earlier Xavier had told Godfrey he was the only son in his family. On another occasion Xavier related that he had a brother on the Copperbelt whom he had once gone to visit. In a session a few days later the conversation goes:

Godfrey: What does your elder brother do?  
 Xavier: No! I have no elder brother.  
 Godfrey: You told me that you have an elder brother in the mines!  
 Xavier: He is from another mother.  
 Godfrey: Oh. Your father is the same?  
 Xavier: No! He has his own father!  
 Godfrey: Say it again!<sup>166</sup>

In later notes with Xavier and other informants, Godfrey uses the term 'classificatory brother' to distinguish such brothers from biological brothers, a term which Zacharia adopted at least once in his own notes.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>164</sup> BC 880, E1, Notes containing Chibemba vocabulary.

<sup>165</sup> BC 880, E1.4–E1.7, Notes containing Chibemba vocabulary; and E1.8, Bemba notes, July–August 1938.

<sup>166</sup> BC880, E1.4, Notes containing Chibemba Vocabulary, entry just after 18 July.

<sup>167</sup> For example, Godfrey uses this term when discussing George, Xavier's 'brother' who followed Xavier from Lusaka, and Zacharia uses the term to refer to Herbert's 'brothers', who were among the relatives that helped him work in the bakery.

In another entry that indicates an easy association between the two but also highlights relations across different cultures, Xavier observes: ‘You do the talking, the listening and the writing [all at once].’ In yet another incidence he asks: ‘Do you not tire of listening to all these stories?’<sup>168</sup> Godfrey also related his own knowledge in conversations. In one instance he asks Xavier if Bemba men pay bride price through cattle as the Nyakyusa men do. In another, perhaps having the Bunyakyusa age villages in mind, he asks him if Bemba villages are organised according to age or clan affiliation.

Godfrey also significantly used Xavier to get background information on African life in urban centres as well as migrant labourers. Detailed conversations on this theme record Xavier’s opinions on migrant labourers, how they lived in town, how they related with the rural homelands, how they sent money and gifts home, did they marry in town, and more. Here Xavier must have been a sounding board for Godfrey’s initial observations and therefore helped Godfrey to frame his research ideas. Part of this learning was through Xavier’s own experiences. We find, for example, Godfrey asking Xavier about how much if at all he sent money back home, and so forth. The two also had lengthy discussions on African life in Livingstone, which Xavier always refers to as *Mosi oa Tunya*, its local name meaning ‘the smoke that thunders’, due to the Falls’ smoky appearance and thundering noise. Here there are detailed conversations on different aspects like African beer brewing and drinking which Xavier condemned in strong terms, the lives of the African unemployed, marriages in urban centres, religion and ‘paganism’, among other topics.<sup>169</sup> Considering the extent to which there are marked similarities between Godfrey’s lines of investigation at

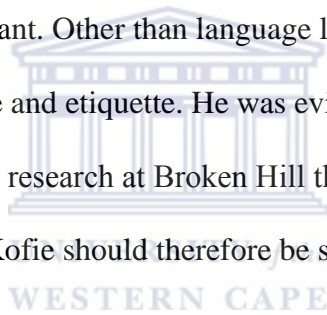
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<sup>168</sup> BC880, E1.8, Bemba notes, July–August 1938.

<sup>169</sup> BC880, E1.8, Bemba notes, July–August 193. See also BC880, E2.1.8, Notes on Xavier Kofie, for Godfrey’s English translations of some these conversations.

Broken Hill and the broad range of topics on African life in urban centres that he discussed with Xavier, to what extent may we foreground Xavier's influence on Godfrey's research?

As with all the life histories collected by Godfrey and Zacharia, Xavier's ends suddenly. As I have shown earlier, due to the souring of relations between Godfrey and the mining company by May 1940, Godfrey's permission to work in the mine compounds was revoked. He went back to Livingstone in June 1940. There is no evidence to suggest that Godfrey continued to associate with Xavier or other informants after he left Broken Hill. Despite this abrupt ending, what this chapter sought to do is to reconstruct Xavier's life history and highlight his significance to Godfrey's project in Northern Rhodesia. He was not only Godfrey's language tutor but also his foremost informant. Other than language learning, Xavier also taught Godfrey aspects of Bemba culture and etiquette. He was evidently influential in foregrounding the anthropologist's research at Broken Hill through being sounded out on the lives of labour migrants. Xavier Kofie should therefore be seen as a significant other in Godfrey's work at Broken Hill.





## CHAPTER THREE

### THE LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE WORK OF ZACHARIA JOHAN MAWERE

Zacharia Mawere was Godfrey's research assistant at Broken Hill between January 1938 and June 1940. While the role of a bridge between the anthropologist and the culture that the anthropologist was studying was one of the main functions of an assistant, this was not the case with Zacharia. Zacharia and Godfrey worked largely independently of each other. Zacharia mostly carried out independent research for Godfrey, collecting most of the census that Godfrey used in the *Essay* and biographical information from mainly Nyanja speakers as well as other data on various aspects of life at Broken Hill, such as pooling of wages among African men, Ngoni marriage practices, and relationships between African men and women. Despite this, Godfrey did not mention Zacharia in his published text, nor did he acknowledge Zacharia's assistance. This chapter therefore narrates Zacharia's personal background and examines his work at Broken Hill, highlighting the centrality of his research to Godfrey's.

#### **Zacharia Mawere's Personal Background**

We learn about Zacharia Mawere through detailed essays about his six brothers and one sister, written by Zacharia between 1939 and 1940.<sup>170</sup> These essays were typed by Zacharia and gave abridged life histories of his siblings with special focus on their achievements seen through education, employment, stature in the family and financial status. Each of the life histories is typed separately, in English, and takes up between one to four pages.

Frustratingly, Zacharia did not write an essay about himself.

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<sup>170</sup> See BC880, E9.17, Zachim (sic) (assistant): biographies.

Zacharia Johan Mawere was born to John Mawere and Mereya Shawa sometime around 1917 in the village of Ngulube in Fort Jameson (now Chipata). In 1939 Zacharia's father was still alive. However, his mother died on 20 March 1937. Zacharia was the fifth-born son and had six brothers and one sister. He spent his childhood and early adulthood in Fort Jameson shepherding his family's animals. The Maweres were Christians and were educated at mission schools. Zacharia and his brothers were all educated by Herbert Zilole Mawere, the first-born son of the Mawere household. Herbert sent Zacharia to Mwami Mission in Fort Jameson in 1931, and then to Blantyre Mission in Nyasaland in 1935. Some of Zacharia's brothers had also attended the latter school.

Herbert did indeed have the financial stature to educate his brothers. Born Herbert Zilole Mawere in 1901, he attended the Dutch Reformed Church School in Fort Jameson. After school he worked for various Europeans in Fort Jameson and Livingstone before moving to Bulawayo, where he worked for 10 years. Like many Africans of his day, Herbert was well dressed, earning the wrath of Europeans for he did not wear the clothes that Africans were issued by their employers 'he wished always to put on a suit in the Southern Rhodesian style.'<sup>171</sup> In his discussion on African dress, Godfrey echoes this point. He writes in the *Essay*: 'Many Europeans, also, are less courteous in their relations with well-dressed Africans than they are in their relations with those in rags, for they resent and fear the implied claim to civilised status.'<sup>172</sup>

In Bulawayo Herbert managed to save 50 pounds in the Standard Bank of South Africa. With these savings, Herbert started a bakery on his return to Fort Jameson. He paid 10 pounds to the district commissioner for a permit to start the business and invested 30 pounds in the

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<sup>171</sup> See BC880, E9.17, Zachim (sic) (assistant): biographies.

<sup>172</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 20.

business. He then involved several relatives in his business including Zacharia, a ‘half-mad’ uncle, and others Zacharia refers to as ‘some classificatory brothers and sisters’.<sup>173</sup> Zacharia must have learnt this term from Godfrey, who used it to distinguish between biological siblings and other relations that Africans referred to as brothers but were cousins, for example. Herbert did not pay his brothers but sent them to school as payment for their labour. His business was successful, providing baked goods to Fort Jameson including to Europeans. A member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Herbert had been married at least three times by 1939 but was a monogamist, as he divorced before remarrying. At the time of writing the life histories Zacharia reports that Herbert had 600 pounds in Barclays Bank.

Akasa Mawere was the second Mawere child and also the only daughter, born on 3 January 1903. She was first married to an Indian but divorced him, after which she married a European with whom she had a daughter. This marriage ended when the European left Fort Jameson. In 1924 she got engaged to an African man, much to the relief of her relatives who did not seem to approve of the inter-racial marriages. The African man paid two heads of cattle for her hand. She had four children with the third husband and by 1939 was living on the Copperbelt with him. She seemed to wield power within the Mawere family as she is ‘recognised as adviser in John Mawere’s family, Herbert Zilole has no power to scold her and everybody is afraid of her.’<sup>174</sup>

Jacob, born 8 August 1906, was the third Mawere child. He held various odd jobs in Fort Jameson before moving to Bulawayo in 1924 following Herbert. He stayed in Bulawayo for eight years and there trained as a boxer. Zacharia reports that ‘in 1932 he returned to his home in Fort Jameson, and when he just stayed a few days , he then kicked (sic) Zacharia

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

very badly with his thick fingers, and nearly spoiled one of his eyes.’<sup>175</sup> He got married in 1933 in Fort Jameson. In 1934 Jacob left for Lusaka, where he worked for at least two Europeans before moving to Ndola. At the time Zacharia writes these life histories, Jacob was still in Ndola with a comfortable 40 pounds in the bank with which he planned to start butchery in Fort Jameson.

William Mawere, born on 2 August 1909, was the next sibling and also Zacharia’s immediate elder brother. Zacharia narrates William Mawere’s life – as the black sheep of the family – through his criminal record. He worked on Fort Jameson farms for some time but various incidents of trouble with the law and the district commissioner made him leave for various towns where he found ready employment. In 1924 William was imprisoned for six months for adultery. Upon his release he committed several offences, including attempted adultery with a European woman, which saw him imprisoned for three years with hard labour in Livingstone. He then went to Nyasaland, where he got into trouble with the law again. From Nyasaland he shifted to Nkana on the Copperbelt, where he committed an offence that saw him imprisoned for five years with hard labour. He was released in 1938 and immediately deported to Fort Jameson. In 1939, when Zacharia wrote his sibling’s histories, no one knew where William was.

Kase Mawere was born on 8 January 1917, the sixth child of John and Mereya. Zacharia is Kase’s immediate elder brother. Kase, Zacharia narrates, ‘spent his time especially with Zacharia herding cattle.’ Like Zacharia, Kase was educated at Mwami Mission School in 1932 and Livingstonia Mission in 1935. By 1939, Kase was at Fort Jameson helping Herbert

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<sup>175</sup> BC880, E9.17, Zachim (sic) (assistant), biographies of various individuals.

with his bakery. Talking of Kase, Zacharia notes, 'he will not marry when his elder Zacharia has not married yet.' Thus, we know that Zacharia was not married by 1939.

The next and seventh born son was Jeremia[h] Mawere born on 5 November 1920. He attended Mwami Mission School, and then transferred to Chimpembi Mission near Broken Hill in 1938, where he was still staying by 1939.

Moses Mawere, 'the beloved son in this family' and also the last child of John and Mereya, was born on 4 November 1922. By 1939, he was schooling at the Chipalamba Mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Mission.

Other than through the biographic stories of his siblings, we also get glimpses of Zacharia's character and life through his fieldnotes, evoking Clifford's suggestion that field writings can reflect the personality of the writer.<sup>176</sup> Unwittingly added in a quickly scribbled and cancelled note in one of the notebooks we get a glimpse of Zacharia's character. In a side note dated 8 December 1939, the conscientious Zacharia records, 'Mr Patrick entered the house at 11:30 pm without warning. And in case of theft and burglary I thought to record them down. And the names of his friends are as follows: 'Safeli + Abel.' The note is signed Z. J. Mawere.<sup>177</sup> I took this note, together with the detail with which Zacharia records his census and biographical sketches and other notes, as an indication of his diligence, sense of responsibility and meticulousness.

Although probably not as financially affluent as his elder brothers Herbert and Jacob, Zacharia was obviously a man of means. Discussing an aspect of African life whereby a

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<sup>176</sup> Clifford, 'Notes on (Field)notes'.

<sup>177</sup> BC 880, E1.14, Notebooks of assistants, recording hut censuses.

group of Africans took turns in giving money to one person every month, a practice referred to shortly, Zacharia notes that he had been approached for money in more than one instance and that he always turned down such arrangements because of the problems of non-payment. Like most Africans at Broken Hill, Zacharia was conscious of how he dressed. Like his informants, he ordered European goods. An envelope, addressed to Zacharia at Broken Hill, tucked away among the pages of one notebook reveals that Zacharia did business with N. Bhaga, ‘gentlemen’s outfitters, Sackville street, Livingstone, NR.’ Hansen reports a similar communication where in a draft letter in one of his notebooks–Zacharia writes to ‘enquire for my goods which I ordered from you on 20 September 1939’ in which Mawere listed his return address as ‘P. O. Box number of the RLI in Livingstone.’<sup>178</sup> This draft may indicate that Zacharia worked in Livingstone before or after his association with Godfrey.



### **Zacharia’s Knowledge Work in Broken Hill**

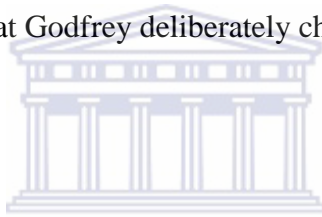
It is not clear how and where Godfrey appointed Zacharia as his research assistant. We know for a fact that, unlike Leonard Mwaishumo who was Godfrey’s assistant in Bunyakyusa, Zacharia did not play any part in Godfrey’s initial language learning, an important aspect of an assistant’s work. Speculatively, it is precisely because Zacharia was not Bemba-speaking that Godfrey appointed him as his research assistant at Broken Hill.

Of the total population of 7,500 men at Broken Hill, only 8per cent spoke Bemba. The majority of the rest of the men came from nearby ethnic group like Lenje, while some of these were from the Eastern Province where Zacharia came from. While Bemba was establishing itself as the lingua franca along the rail line, Zacharia’s original language Nyanja was equally gaining currency in urban centres, especially in the central part of Zambia where

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<sup>178</sup> Hansen, ‘Urban Research in a Hostile Setting’, 19.

Broken Hill was located. Nyanja is a prominent language in Zambia. It is a variant of Chichewa and is widely spoken in the Eastern parts of the country and is also a lingua franca in urban centres in central Zambia like Lusaka and Kabwe. Nyanja is also spoken in parts of Malawi and Mozambique. Zacharia was Ngoni, one of the groups found in Eastern, and he certainly spoke Nyanja. In a letter to her father while in Livingstone, Monica expressed surprise at the fact that, in the central and southern regions of Northern Rhodesia, Nyanja was more spoken than Bemba.<sup>179</sup> All the interviews conducted by Godfrey were conducted in Bemba. Save for one small sentence during an interview between Godfrey and Xavier in which Godfrey explains a Nyanja term from Xavier's narrative, there is absolutely no indication in Godfrey's notes that he spoke or understood any other local language except for Bemba. It is therefore apparent that Godfrey deliberately chose Zacharia, a Nyanja speaker, to be his assistant.



As I have noticed earlier in this thesis, Godfrey had learnt Bemba in preparation for working on the Copperbelt, where Bemba was largely spoken. He never worked on the Copperbelt however. While Godfrey concentrated almost solely on Bemba speakers, Zacharia interviewed mostly Nyanja speakers and people from ethnic groups other than Bemba. The people interviewed were almost all non-Bemba; most of them were Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga, all of which are kin to Nyanja. Other than the general fact that Nyanja is more often spoken in Broken Hill than Bemba, evidence from the archive supports this claim that Nyanja was an important language at Broken Hill. For example, on 23 March 1994, Godfrey attended a meeting of African men there with the war information officer, to brief the men about the war and war recruitment. Muwamba, one of Godfrey and Zacharia's informants,

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<sup>179</sup> BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, July 1938.

was asked to translate into Nyanja.<sup>180</sup> The memo of 13 March 1940 which had been posted in public spaces for the attention of African men also announced the meeting in Nyanja and Bemba, with the notice in Nyanja on top and the Bemba translation at the bottom.<sup>181</sup> I took this ordering of the memo between the two languages as well as the preference of translating into Nyanja at an official meeting as indicative of the importance of Nyanja at Broken Hill.

As early as March 1939, Zachariah was already working for Godfrey. One of Zacharia's earliest notebooks is labelled 'Broken Hill, March 31, 1938'. Zacharia recorded no less than seven notebooks at Broken Hill. He recorded census and biographical data from the government farms, Pullon's (also spelt as Pullan and Pullen) compound, railway compound, old beer hall section, the Broken Hill market and police camp, among others. On my count, Zacharia recorded censuses for no less than 500 households.<sup>182</sup> The tables of African populations in the *Essay* thus drew significantly on Zacharia's work.<sup>183</sup>

Zacharia recorded all his notes and biographic sketches in English, unlike Godfrey, who recorded his mostly in Bemba with occasional English translations. With a sporadic forward slant, Zacharia's handwriting is clear, each letter clearly written. It is clumsy in places with occasional big letters. In some places Zacharia cancels and corrects his notes a lot. This is particularly the case when he records the 23 pages on Ngoni marriage. Seemingly, he goes over his notes after the interviews and rubs out words, sometimes he replaces one word with another, and sometimes he corrects facts. In a few instances he types his notes, further revising the information contained. For example, there is a typescript on the relationships between men and women which includes an interview with an Ngoni girl, described below.

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<sup>180</sup> BC880, E9.5, Legal proceedings.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> See BC880, E1.11, E1.12, E1.14, Notebooks of assistants, recording hut census; and E1.15, E1.16 and E1.17, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches.

<sup>183</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 18–21.



Here he significantly alters the original content.<sup>184</sup> Godfrey occasionally interjects in Zacharia's notes, correcting some data or cancelling some words and replacing them with others. Evidently, Godfrey sometimes went over Zacharia's notes or discussed them with him. Zacharia's English is simple and clear, well spelt but poorly punctuated. He usually writes English in the vernacular, obviously literally translating from Nyanja to English.

Apart from the census and biographical sketches Zacharia also records a significant body of notes on different aspects of African life in Broken Hill. His own knowledge, interpretations and opinion are generously provided throughout some of these texts. He provided information on at least three African churches, for example, on the Dutch Reformed Church Mission, which we learn had 249 members plus 344 children and 161 members in the Bible class. There were also details such as the fees for attending the Bible class, offerings per month, and so on.



He records important 'native welfare' information on money saving and lending schemes among Africans, information Godfrey drew on for the *Essay*.<sup>185</sup> These schemes, which Godfrey calls 'pooling of wages', a phrase that Zachariah did not use in his notes but which he instead termed 'giving chance', involved a scheme whereby Africans in groups of two or more would decide on a rotational 'lending' of money to each other when they got paid. In a particular month, all or most of one's salary was handed over to one person who collected from different people. The next salaries would go to another person and so forth. Zachariah records that the scheme was very important as it was difficult for anyone to save money, and the scheme enabled people to buy valuable items in one go. The agreements were verbal. In the *Essay*, Godfrey records these interpretations nearly exactly. While he talked with his

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<sup>184</sup> BC880, E9.7, Pagan religion, 1940.

<sup>185</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 76–7.

informants on this practice, it is clear that Zacharia's interpretations and analysis impacted on Godfrey's interpretations.<sup>186</sup>

In one interview with the underlined title 'Ngoni girl explained to me', Zacharia recorded detailed notes on romantic and sexual relationships between men and women in Broken Hill. From these notes we learn how economic needs prompted women to have several husbands when they came to live in urban areas so that they could purchase clothes and send money back home. He records how he counterchecked this information with a 'Lenje girl and even Bemba', who affirmed that it was correct.<sup>187</sup> He also interviewed a couple on this topic, 'Salard and his wife who stay near the tea room of Jacob.' He recorded portions of the conversation. Here the man condemned women for this behaviour and his wife told him that women liked men who gave them a lot of money, who loved working in different towns and listened to women's wishes.<sup>188</sup> In giving his analysis, Zacharia notes that it pleased men and women to receive the attention of the opposite sex – and that 'dressing properly' for 'the beer hall where they can meet many men and women' was an important part of the process.

In another notebook Zacharia recorded a 23-page history of Ngoni marriages and practices.<sup>189</sup> The information recorded in English in this notebook is later typed in Nyanja.<sup>190</sup> Although Godfrey's *Essay* discussed marriage rites in town, his observations seem to have been restricted to Bemba marriages that he personally observed and researched. Zacharia's detailed notes on Ngoni marriage rites did not feature in Godfrey's analysis.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See in particular, *ibid*, 77.

<sup>187</sup> In a typed script of these interviews, Zacharia adds more details that are not in the notebook, see BC880, E9.16, Miscellaneous, for the typed notes. Here he records interviews with several boys on the topic.

<sup>188</sup> There is a slight difference between the original narrative in Zacharia's notebook and his typed script. See BC880, E1.16, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches, and BC880, E9.16, Miscellaneous.

<sup>189</sup> BC880, E1.16, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches.

<sup>190</sup> See BC880, E9.20, Ngoni marriage.

<sup>191</sup> Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting', 18–20.

While Godfrey's notes have more transcription because he writes on the spot as conversations are taking place, Zacharia's notes are largely thickly descriptive and recorded in reported speech. The exceptions are the census and biographical sketches, which Zacharia seems to record on the spot. Even then, unlike Godfrey, he rarely records entire conversations but writes a reported narrative of the interview. In this way his notes are less rich than Godfrey's, primarily because it is difficult to pick out interactions between the parties involved and the contexts of the conversations. While Godfrey dates almost all his interviews, indicating also the place of the interview, Zacharia does not. His sketches and census are certainly recorded in the homes of the informants. He does give the date and location on the cover of the notebooks, however. In the majority of the sketches he painstakingly sticks to the order of questioning that Godfrey must have inducted him in: tribe, first tax year, work history, marital status, tribe of wife, hut number, number of people the man is living with, number of children, monthly expenditure, relationship with home area reflected through both husband's and wife's visits back home, and amount of money or gifts sent home.<sup>192</sup> The census/sketch usually ends with the total number in that household.

In some instances Zacharia's notes reveal a surprising level of zeal and engagement with his informants. In these cases his notes are detailed, clear and have data that are missing from Godfrey's narratives. For example, when recording the details of cash expenditures by workers, he lists specific items that are bought – silk blankets, suits, clothes, shoes, and costs of each of the items (postage, deposit sent, 'war time tax paid', clearance tax, custom duty and soon).<sup>193</sup> He also asks his informants where they buy their clothes from. Thus we learn

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<sup>192</sup> Part of the analysis in *Analysis of Social Change* stems from these data, see Godfrey Wilson and Monica H. Wilson, *Analysis of Social Change*.

<sup>193</sup> BC880, E1.15, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches.

that the favourite European companies where Africans ordered their clothes are Lenards, Oxendale, Langfield, and John Noble ('the company that made things cheaper', Zacharia adds).<sup>194</sup> He even records the average number of orders that a person made per year. After a session with one of his informants, he sees fit to add, 'His statement was provided to me in five minutes' time.'<sup>195</sup> All these points reveal Zacharia to have been a meticulous researcher with a love of detail.

Hansen has similarly drawn attention to Zacharia's detail regarding the earlier experiences of labour migrants, particularly aspects of payment in form of cloth and not cash during the early development of labour migration.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, compared to Godfrey's, Zacharia's notes are more detailed about the trials of early migrant labourers such as difficulties of getting to urban centres due to lack of transportation.<sup>197</sup>



### **The Triangulation of Relationships: Zacharia's Relationship with Godfrey and His Other Informants**

There is a huge difference between Godfrey's working relationship with Leonard Mwaisumo, his research assistant and interpreter in Bunyakyusa, and with Zacharia. At Bunyakyusa, Godfrey seems to have worked closely with Leonard because Leonard was not only a language tutor but also an assistant and interpreter. From the Bank et al article in *Inside African Anthropology*, it appears there was a lot more engagement between Godfrey and Leonard than there was between Godfrey and Zacharia. The reason for this lies largely in the totally different kinds of researches at Bunyakyusa and Broken Hill.

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting', 20–1.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

As we have seen in the foregoing chapter, by the time Godfrey started his research at Broken Hill, a good one year after he had arrived in Northern Rhodesia, he was already exceptionally fluent in Bemba. He therefore did not need an interpreter or translator for his research. His notes at Broken Hill indicate that he worked without an interpreter or translator. Secondly, as I have suggested above, Godfrey evidently hired Zacharia, a Nyanja speaker, so that Zacharia could work with non-Bemba speakers. The two men therefore largely worked separately. Save for little titbits in the notes, it is thus difficult to get a more insightful or richer fabric of the interactions between the two men.

These titbits include occasional indications that Zacharia accompanied Godfrey to some dance competitions. In these instances, there is evidence of conversations between the two men, in which Godfrey refers to Zacharia as 'Zachie'. The familiarity that a shortening a name signifies may point to the close relationship between the two men. In another entry, in which Godfrey refers to Zacharia simply as 'Z.M', Zacharia visits Godfrey at his home where he tells Godfrey of a raid and some fracas that took place the previous evening in one of the African locations.<sup>198</sup> Zacharia obviously spoke English well. It is therefore likely that he and Godfrey conversed in English

As I have discussed above, Zacharia's notes reveal that he related easily with his informants. The fact that most of these were his kinsmen from the eastern part of Zambia and spoke Nyanja with them must have been a great advantage to Zacharia. He seems to have interviewed both men and women. Nevertheless, unlike Godfrey, who recorded whole

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<sup>198</sup> BC880, E9.6, Political organisations, 1940.

conversations thereby contextualising the interactions with his informants, Zacharia did not. It is therefore difficult to get a fuller range of interactions between him and his informants.

This chapter sought to recover the identity of Godfrey's assistant at Broken Hill from 1938 to mid-1940. It followed increasing scholarship on the assistant, a man between two cultures who worked as a bridge between the anthropologists and indigenous communities. Despite this generic description of assistants, Zacharia's role as an independent co-researcher in Godfrey's Broken Hill research is evidence of his centrality in the research. Through notes on his family (specifically on his five brothers and one sister) we get a glimpse of Zacharia's life. He was the fifth child in this family of achievers, having been born between 1907 and 1917. He spent his early life in a village in Fort Jameson, where he herded his family's cattle. Between 1932 and 1935, he attended school at Mwami Mission and Livingstonia Mission in Fort Jameson and Nyasaland respectively. Although his work history is not known, we at least know he worked in his elder brother's bakery at Fort Jameson before starting work with Godfrey. Zacharia's notebooks reveal him to be conscientious and hardworking with a zeal and enthusiasm for his work as an indigenous ethnographer. He was central to Godfrey's research at Broken Hill, recording hut censuses in most of the African locations there. He also collected more than five hundred biographical sketches. Zacharia also collected data on several topics at Broken Hill including material on Ngoni marriage, financial practices among Africans, and relationships between men and women. The extent of Zacharia's detail in his research, particularly his interest in clothes and clothing among Africans, is one example of his significant contribution to Godfrey's research. This is evident when we consider the fact that clothing was an important aspect of Godfrey's analysis of changing social, economic and cultural patterns among Africans. Zacharia's own subjective position as an African, with personal and similar experiences to his informants, must have aided his work as an insider

ethnographer. In making these general arguments, this chapter has therefore sought to highlight Zacharia's significance and agency in the knowledge project.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ‘FRATERNISING WITH AFRICANS’: GODFREY AND HIS INFORMANTS AT BROKEN HILL

The collection of a large body of biographical sketches (or life histories, as Godfrey occasionally called them) was a central aspect – if not *the* central aspect – of Godfrey’s methodology at Broken Hill. These sketches are significant in enabling us to analyse not only Godfrey’s methodological approaches but most importantly his conclusions in the *Essay*. Godfrey proved his conclusions about Africans becoming urbanised by providing evidence from the life histories of his informants. The focus of these stories was on the labour histories of the migrants, their expenditures in town which clearly indicate urban forms of consumption, their relationships with original homelands seen through visits and money/gifts sent there, and most importantly their length of stay in town. The life histories also dwelt on analyses of the formations of an urban culture among informants including through marriage rites in town which had taken a distinct characteristic shift from the style in the countryside, intertribal relations like intertribal marriages, the formation of kinship bonds specific to urban contexts, among other sides of life.

It is these aspects then that formed the basis of the life histories that Godfrey collected from at least a hundred informants at Broken Hill.<sup>199</sup> Read against the published *Essay*, the extent to which the informants’ narratives and personal experiences influenced Godfrey’s analyses and conclusion is striking. Here I argue that these narratives and personal experiences were

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<sup>199</sup> This is my approximation arrived at through a cursory count. However, the number of Africans he interviewed was obviously significantly higher, as his tables in both Parts I and II show.



influential in shaping Godfrey's not only on the urbanisation of Africans but his conclusions on race relations, African urban cultures and life, among other things.

As I have noted, Godfrey worked almost exclusively with Bemba informants. Consequently, nearly all the sketches he collected are of Bemba migrants.<sup>200</sup> It is unclear how Godfrey chose his subjects, or what motivated them to share their stories. He does not seem to have offered any inducements or gifts in exchange for their stories.

We do know from the fieldnotes that the majority of Godfrey's informants lived in the mine compound. A significant number of sketches were also collected in other places in Broken Hill, including Broken Hill town compound, government farms, railway compound and aerodrome compound, and other places.<sup>201</sup> The sketches of the married men included details of their wives. A census conducted by the mining company in 1940 records approximately 2,250 men in the compound. Of these, 1,800 were single. There were 420 women and 500 children.<sup>202</sup> Based on Godfrey's and Zacharia's figures, the *Essay* reports similar figures.<sup>203</sup> Most of the sketches were recorded in the huts of the informants, either inside the house or in the yards. These 'homes' were small one-roomed huts. In almost all cases Godfrey indicates the hut number of the subject. The mine number, first tax year as well as personal details such as homeland, tribe, marital status, religious affiliation and family background are usually also included on the initial pages.

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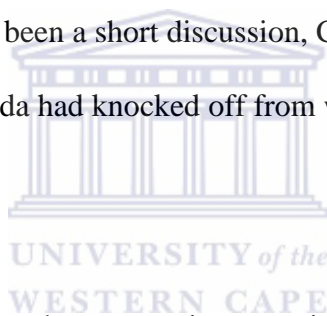
<sup>200</sup> Hansen has also drawn attention to this. See Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting', 11–12.

<sup>201</sup> BC 880, E2 to E7 has outline biographies of men from different compounds and residential areas in Broken Hill. E3.1.1 Outline biographies of men in the town compound, 1939–1940 Includes a list of the men interviewed.

<sup>202</sup> BC880, E8.6, Tables relating to various aspects of Broken Hill research, Statistics from 1940 census. See also G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 10 for Godfrey's figures.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

These sketches indicate that the sessions in which they were collected are informal. Some are recorded through chance meetings of people that Godfrey had already interviewed. For example, in one session with Mulenga, whose story I discuss shortly, Godfrey and Mulenga met in a friend's house where Godfrey had gone to talk to the friend. The conversation that issued between Mulenga and Godfrey is several pages of Mulenga's details. In another Godfrey met Mulenga on the way to a beer party and launched into a discussion with him on his expenditure over the previous months.<sup>204</sup> In one interview with Duncan Chanda, whose life history I discuss here, Godfrey went to his house and found him preparing to go to his garden. Godfrey accompanied him there and recorded the conversation about his economic life, including agricultural practices in the mine compound. In another entry regarding Chanda, after what seems to have been a short discussion, Chanda abruptly left Godfrey in his yard to go to the garden. Chanda had knocked off from work at 3 p.m. and left for the garden at 4.



There are many encounters where a chance meeting turns into a conversation that is recorded on the spot or later. In commenting on this, Hansen has noted that Godfrey seemed to have spoken to or interviewed Africans wherever he found them, including when he was taking walks with his wife Monica.<sup>205</sup> The notes give a feeling that Godfrey was an everyday presence in the African residential areas, that the interviews with his informants were informal and almost certainly not fixed by, for example, formal appointments. The conversations are also marked by an ease of relationships between Godfrey and the men, revealing laughter, teasing, and intimate discussions about women and marriage.

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<sup>204</sup> Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting', 11.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

Most of the detailed sketches like the two I discuss here were collected in conversations that took place over several sessions, stretching over a period of at least one year. While the initial sessions are about personal background, family stress, and suchlike, later sessions usually dwell on expenditures as well discussions on general topics like Christianity, marriage rites, and race relations.

It is because of this general line of investigation, which was regulated by Godfrey's research agenda that the sketches do not differ in scope. They are therefore emblematic of the experiences of male migrant labourers. I therefore briefly discuss the details of Duncan Chanda and Mulenga Bisiketi, both of whom Godfrey interviewed between 1939 and 1940, as examples of these biographies and as representative of the relationship between Godfrey and his informants. There is no reason for my selection of these two except that they were drawn to my attention initially because of their specific mention in the catalogue, and they best suit my purposes here as they are not too detailed but have enough detail to get a view of the kind of informants Godfrey worked with.

### **Mulenga Bisiketi**

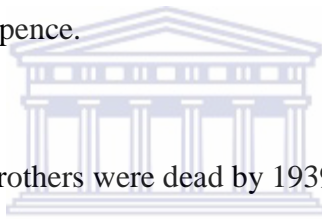
There were at least five sessions for Godfrey and Mulenga Bisiketi between February 1939 and March 1940.<sup>206</sup> At least three of these were held in Mulenga's hut, one on 28 February 1940 was a chance encounter when Godfrey while in the compound ran into Mulenga and a friend Icoro who were on their way to a beer party, and another was recorded in Icoro's compound, where Mulenga seems to have stumbled upon Godfrey interviewing Icoro<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> See BC880, E2.1.5, Notes on Mulenga Bisiketi.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, entries for 10 February 1939 and after.

Like many of Godfrey's informants, Mulenga was a resident of the mine compound, occupant of hut number 56, where most of his sessions with Godfrey took place. He was employed in the mine and listed as number 868. He came from a village in Kasama, and was a member of the Mbulo clan. In 1926 when he was just a young boy he, in the company of three friends, walked a distance of 554 kilometres from Kasama to Broken Hill in search of employment because of 'poverty and lack of clothes' in the village. We neither learn of the details of what must have been a very significant journey, nor of Mulenga's first encounters with town life. This information would have been especially interesting given that Mulenga had not had any schooling and had not worked anywhere else before taking up employment at Broken Hill Mine. He paid his first tax at Broken Hill in 1926. As of February 1939, his wage was twelve shillings and sixpence.



Mulenga had five siblings. Two brothers were dead by 1939 while one lived in Luwingu in Northern Zambia. His two sisters were still living in his home village with his mother. His father was deceased. Mulenga had not gone back to visit the family in his home village in the 14 years since coming to Broken Hill.

In 1932 he had married a Bemba woman named Margarita, from Mpika, at Citola village. Margarita reached puberty in 1926. Unlike her husband who was not a Christian, Margarita was a baptised member of the Catholic Church. In a conversation of 30 March 1939, Mulenga informed Godfrey that he did not join the Catholic Church because he did not agree with the Church's strict rules on divorce, which made it difficult for one to divorce a spouse especially if both were baptised members. While she was Mulenga's first wife, Margarita had been married before and had two children from her first marriage, by a man who was

working in Ndola. Mulenga and Margarita had three children of their own between 1932 and 1939, two boys and a girl.

Evoking the sense of dislocation that is evident in Xavier's *'Amachona'* essay, Mulenga informed Godfrey of his desire to visit his home village but admitted he might never do so because of insufficient funds for the preparation and undertaking of a visit home.<sup>208</sup> This conversation takes place in hut number 46, belonging to Icoro another of Godfrey's informant, who also contributes to the discussion, agreeing with Mulenga on the point of insufficient funds.<sup>209</sup> In this conversation, Mulenga admits that he wished, however, that if he died, his wife and children would return home. In response to Godfrey's question about why he would want this, Mulenga laughingly responds that he did not want his children to be uprooted the way he had been, because he did not want them to learn the culture and language of other ethnic groups in town to the extent that they would fail to speak Bemba when they returned to the village. Joining in Mulenga's laughter, Icoro jokes that he and Mulenga were rootless as a result of staying in town for too long. Such conversations, where the informants freely reveal what must have been painful realities, give the sense of trust, even masculine intimacy and relationship between the parties involved.

There are other glimpses in the notes of such interactions between Godfrey and Mulenga. In a conversation on 30 March 1939, perhaps because Mulenga felt freer with Godfrey having had conversations with him before, he relates personal details of his wife's first marriage and his own courtship with Margarita. Here Mulenga describes how his wife had been chased from her first marriage by her husband on suspicion of adultery. He goes to discuss details of how

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, entry for 10 February 1939.

<sup>209</sup> See BC880, E9.13, Biographical information about various individuals. Melech Icoro is one of the people listed in this part of the catalogue

he met Margarita and proposed to her, officially sending a friend with four shillings to ask for her hand in marriage from Magarita's maternal aunt just days after they had met.

In line with his style of investigation, Godfrey interviewed Mulenga on his expenditures for July to November 1939. This conversation took place on 5 December 1939. We thus learn that in July 1939 Mulenga spent his whole salary of twelve shillings and sixpence on a legal case in the compound. Mulenga gives the details in a later conversation. Apparently Mulenga had taken a lover, a girl who had come from the countryside to visit her sister and brother-in-law at Broken Hill. Upon hearing of the affair, the girl's relatives summoned Mulenga, demanding that he start supporting the girl financially and threatening to take him to the tribal elders or the compound manager if he refused to do so. Fearing that they might make good on their threats, Mulenga agreed to settle the issue by giving the girl's relatives one pound and ending the affair. His August salary was spent on the preparations for the wife's journey to the village which she undertook in October 1939, returning to Broken Hill in February 1940.<sup>210</sup> On this journey the wife took an undisclosed quantity of cloth as gifts for relatives in the village. His September salary went on food for the household as well as preparations for his wife's journey. This expenditure is in line with Godfrey's conclusions that travel between Broken Hill and Kasama required at least two salaries for transport fares alone, hence it was financially constraining to visit the rural areas.<sup>211</sup> In October, Mulenga bought a suit for two shillings and sixpence; the rest of his salary seems to have been saved. In November, 10 shillings was saved in a hole dug in the middle of his hut, a form of saving money that was common among the men, five shillings was spent on the purchase of a new shirt, while five shillings went on beer. We learn also that in the absence of the wife, between October 1939 and February 1940, Mulenga employed a male relative of his wife to prepare meals for him.

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<sup>210</sup> BC880, E2.1.5, Notes on Mulenga Bisiketeti, entries for 28 February and 5 December 1939.

<sup>211</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 24.

It is not indicated how much he was paid. The practice of employment of Africans by fellow Africans seems to have been common in Broken Hill as some of the men interviewed, including Xavier Kofie, reported having fellow Africans in their employ. The *Essay* reports 140 African houseboys employed by fellow Africans in 1940.<sup>212</sup>

In the conversation of 28 February 1940, when Mulenga was on his way to a beer party and met Godfrey, Godfrey records Mulenga's expenditures for January 1940. He bought two items of clothing for his children costing three pence and sixpence respectively, also fish, flour and bread at sixpence each, paraffin for sixpence, razor blades for three pence and three other items for three pence each. He seemed to have spent another 10 shillings from his savings for items I could not make out due to Godfrey's illegible handwriting.

In terms of his relationship with the village, we learn that the time Magrita went to visit was the second time that Mulenga had sent money or gifts back home. The first was in 1927, the year after he arrived in Broken Hill, when he had sent his mother a silk blanket through a friend who had gone to visit the village.

### **Duncan Chanda**

Another of Godfrey's informants at Broken Hill was Duncan Chanda, a Bemba from Chief Mwamba's village in Kasama. Duncan was resident of hut number 56 and employed under mine number 1530. He came to Broken Hill by lorry in the company of three friends between 1927 and 1928. Disappointingly, the details of the transition from countryside to town are missing in the narrative. Before coming to Broken Hill, he had held at least three jobs at Kasama, working for at least three different Europeans. These jobs variously involved

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

working as a cook, houseboy, tennis boy and accompanying one of the employers on safaris. In Kasama his wages were three shillings and sixpence, seven shillings and sixpence later increased to 10 shillings, and eleven shillings and sixpence, again increased to 15 shillings. The motivation for going to Broken Hill was to search for better pay because the employers in Kasama refused to significantly increase the wages.

Duncan married in 1932, to a daughter of an acquaintance of Godfrey's, Leni Mwamba, who was a resident of the government farms (five-acre plots). Duncan's wife had travelled from her original hometown Mpika to Broken Hill in 1934 and got engaged to Duncan the following year. She reached puberty in 1936. The two got married in 1937 and their first child was born in 1938. Unlike Duncan, who had only two weeks of schooling, Duncan's wife had attended a Catholic school for two years before relocating to Broken Hill.

Evoking the sense of male sociability that was central to Godfrey's fieldwork, and as with Godfrey's other married informants, Godfrey discussed marriage details with Duncan. These included the fact that Duncan had been charged two pounds and ten shillings as *lobola* but had only paid managed to pay less than half of that. Duncan also related details of the marriage festivities that had taken place during the marriage. In two separate sessions after the discussions about Duncan's marriage, Duncan asked Godfrey to relate procedures and rites of European marriages, which Godfrey did, given that he had invited these questions on at least one occasion.<sup>213</sup>

Other than the fact that marriage was obviously a subject close to his informants' hearts, marriage was one of the key factors that Godfrey used to analyse rates of urbanisation among

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<sup>213</sup> BC880, E2.1.4, Outline biography of Duncan Canda (sic). See entries for 22 and 27 February, 31 March and 7 December 1939.



Africans. Through an analysis of marriage procedures and how the urban context had shaped them, Godfrey was able to highlight urbanisation among Africans through changing practices. For example, the forms of bride-wealth in Broken Hill had become more monetary than gift-based as in the villages. There was evidence of intermarriage between different ethnic groups as well as of more permanent settlement of families in Broken Hill. Godfrey was equally interested in the relationship between the in-laws in the marriage and juxtaposing the roles of relatives in town and countryside that showed marked changes in marriage procedures between the two places.<sup>214</sup> These analyses made up part of his argument for permanent and temporary urbanisation in the *Essay*.<sup>215</sup>

Duncan worked for four or five years as a cook for at least two different Europeans in Broken Hill, earning 25 shillings per month. He resigned from these jobs because of bad treatment from his employers as well as a desire for better pay. After leaving his last job as a cook, Duncan stayed for four months without pay. The little money he had saved up (about 24 shillings) ran out within the first month, forcing him to live off friends for the remainder of the time he was unemployed. Upon seeing his distress, the friends donated money for a train fare to Livingstone as well as food for the journey. Duncan left for Livingstone in search of employment. In Livingstone he worked as a cook at 25 shillings per month from around 1932 to 1933, after which he returned to Broken Hill. At Broken Hill he found work as a cook for a European, leaving the job just after two weeks because he felt he was not liked by his employer. In 1934 Duncan was taken up by the mine, doing surface work in the zinc plant at 12 shillings per month, a job he still held as late as 1940.

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<sup>214</sup> BC880, E.2.1.1, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men I; E.2.1.2, Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men II; and E.2.1.3: Broken Hill mine compound, Outline biographies of married men III.

<sup>215</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 47 and Part II, last chapter.

The influences of these particular narratives in shaping the analyses in the *Essay* are pronounced. While Godfrey had been struck by and seemingly disapproving of Xavier Kofie's frequent change of jobs, as I elaborated earlier, there is no indication of such a reaction in later interviews with men at Broken Hill. The narratives of informants at Broken Hill helped Godfrey to make a more informed and sympathetic analysis of what he called 'inter-urban circulation' among Africans, which involved moving from one job to another within the Copperbelt, Broken Hill, Livingstone and occasionally Wankie.<sup>216</sup> In line with the general themes of the *Essay*, Godfrey explained this phenomenon as resulting from the 'one-sided economic developments' that made for 'social tension' and 'instability' resulting from a lack of 'mutual understanding and respect' between Africans and Europeans, which militated against Africans staying long in one job.<sup>217</sup> The problem of racial tensions and its effect on inter-urban circulation among Africans was compounded by other factors that were a result of the capitalist organisation of the economy, including high rates of rural-urban migration, the lack of skills among Africans that made their labour cheap and plentiful, the competition among urban Africans for jobs and women, among other things.<sup>218</sup> Additionally, a reading of the published text against the narratives of migrant labourers in the archive illuminates not only African agency in shaping the anthropologist's narrative, but African agency in the face of the difficult working conditions such as low wages and racism among European employers. The shifting from one job to another was a form of resistance against these harsh conditions and also a way of dealing with them.

In a conversation of 27 February 1939, Godfrey records Duncan's views on race relations. Here Duncan complained about Europeans, telling Godfrey that Europeans 'were very bad

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<sup>216</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 56-7.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, 56-7.

people' as they made their African servants 'suffer a lot'.<sup>219</sup> This, Duncan explained, was one of the reasons he had shifted from one job to another and ended up working for the mine, where wages were significantly lower than those for a houseboy or cook working for an individual European. Duncan was particularly outspoken about maltreatment by married European men, noting that European bachelors made better employers than their married counterparts.

Both Karen Hansen and Jennifer Chansa have also recorded instances where Godfrey openly discussed race relations with Africans, conversations in which Africans voiced complaints about their maltreatment at the hands of Europeans. For example, Hansen has drawn attention to complaints by an informant, Sammie, over the unfairness of European men going after African women, given that Europeans considered Africans as poorer.<sup>220</sup> Chansa has noted a discussion between Godfrey and a key informant named Mwamba, where Mwamba criticised Godfrey's opinions on love, noting that there can never be love between Europeans and Africans because of the poor ways in which Europeans treated Africans.<sup>221</sup> In another instance, Chansa records complaints by an informant, Mr Konie, who was offended when a European bank clerk refused to attend to him because another European bank employee had addressed the informant as 'Mr'.<sup>222</sup> Conclusively, the narratives by informants of their relations with Europeans are not only important in and of themselves, but also significantly point to African agency in shaping the anthropologist's narrative and conclusions. This is clear when these narratives are read against the *Essay*, whose concurrent themes are 'social tension', 'uneven development' and 'disequilibrium' resulting largely from racialised organisation of the economy that negatively affected Africans both in town and rural areas.

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<sup>219</sup> BC 880, E2.1.4, Outline biography of Duncan Canda (sic), see entry for 20 February 1939.

<sup>220</sup> Hansen, 'Urban Research in a Hostile Setting', 12.

<sup>221</sup> Chansa, "'Urbanization" of Colonial Mine Labour in Zambia', 52.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 53.

Speculatively also, herein lies the motivation of Godfrey's informants to tell their stories, as a way of speaking back against an oppressive system that did not leave much in the way of redress.

As with all his other informants, Godfrey collected detailed information on Duncan's expenditure as well as how much of his money was sent back home as cash or in kind.<sup>223</sup> We thus know that between 1927 and 1932, when Duncan relocated to Livingstone, he had sent a total of three pounds to his mother in the village. He had sent a further two pounds during his stint at Livingstone and another pound since starting work at the mine's zinc plant, which he had sent in 1937. In 1938 he twice sent three pieces of cloth valued at five shillings each, once through an elder brother who had gone back home for a visit. At another time Duncan had sent three unspecified items of clothing to his mother through a person who had travelled to the village. And at yet another time, he had sent his mother a blanket valued at 15 shillings. All the money was sent through the post.<sup>224</sup> Like Mulenga Bisiketi, Duncan had not visited home since arriving in town in 1927.

In September 1939 Duncan spent five shillings on a shirt and 15 shillings on relish and flour. In October, two shillings and sixpence was spent on relish and one pound on his wife's clothes, and in November seventeen shillings and sixpence went on his clothes and about five shillings on relish. Other than his earnings and the food rations that mine employees got, Duncan like many other Africans complemented his salary with food from a garden which Godfrey accompanied him to on 27 February 1939.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> For a summary of the expenditures of Africans interviewed by Godfrey and Zacharia, see G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part II, 17–25.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, Part I, 43–5. Table VI breaks down money sent to home villages, table VII gives types of gifts to home villages, and table VIII shows methods of transfer.

<sup>225</sup> The 'little garden', as Godfrey described it, was located between the mine compound and the Catholic church and measured roughly 15 by 24 metres. The garden had maize, some groundnuts, pumpkins and beans.

Other than these points of personal economics, Godfrey interviewed Duncan at length about aspects of African economic life at Broken Hill. Chief among these was the pooling wages among a group of friends, mentioned earlier, where each person received a set portion of money from all the others each month, allowing each one to save. Additionally, Duncan discussed the pooling of food and rations among Africans, whereby a person or family pooled their rations/food with another and ate from one place, or else a group of people alternated in eating from each other's homes. This practice was prevalent among almost all the African men and helped, among other things, to cement kinship ties. All these schemes were forms of urban culture that Africans created as survival strategies in the urban areas. They also significantly contributed to Godfrey's analyses in the *Essay*. For example, data from informants about the money and gifts sent back to rural areas led Godfrey to include only 10 per cent of African wages in urban areas was sent back to rural areas either in monetary form or as gifts.<sup>226</sup> The implication of this for his argument about urbanisation and his critique of the migrant labour system, which assumed that the loss of manpower in rural areas was offset by the transfer of money from the urban centre to rural areas, is obvious. Additionally, through an analysis of the forms that part of the 10 per cent took, such as clothes, bicycles, blankets and pots, led Godfrey to suggest that this portion of the wages sent to rural areas especially when sent in these ways, was further leading to impoverishment in rural areas, as it was encouraging assimilation of European and capitalist forms of consumption. My argument here therefore is the significance of individual informants' experiences and narratives in shaping Godfrey's conclusions.

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While the maize seems to have been doing well, Godfrey observed that 'the other stuff was in a poor state'. It seems that Duncan's garden had not done any better the previous year, producing only a half bag of maize. From the discussion in the garden, we learn that the gardens were issued by the *capitao*, who issued the plots on request. There was no permanent ownership of plots and one could request a different plot from year to year.

<sup>226</sup> G. Wilson, *Essay*, Part I, 43.

This chapter sought to demonstrate the influence of Godfrey's informants on his analyses and conclusions in his published text. It also attempted to highlight the fieldwork relationship between the anthropologist and the informants. In doing this, I drew on the life histories and relationship with Godfrey of two of his central informants, Mulenga Bisiketi and Duncan Chanda, with whom Godfrey worked from early 1939 to mid-1940. Based on my reading of a significant body of these histories, I have argued that the stories of these two men are typical of those of the other informants given that Godfrey used a set framework of questions that was tailored towards his research, one that emphasised the working history, consumption and expenditure patterns and relationship between town and country of the informants. The chapter attempted to reconstruct the fieldwork experiences through a reading of Godfrey's relationship in the field with the informants. Through a reading of the *Essay* alongside the fieldnotes, this chapter has argued for the agency of Africans in shaping Godfrey's analyses and the influence of their personal narratives on Godfrey's personal experiences. This is particularly striking in regard to Godfrey's outspokenness against unequal racial relations, his argument for the urbanisation of Africans and his analyses of changing consumption habits among Africans. Through the stories of Duncan and Mulenga, representative of experiences of migrant labourers in Northern Rhodesia at this particular time, the chapter has drawn attention to the ways in which Africans negotiated the situations they found themselves in order to fit in the new order.

## CHAPTER FIVE

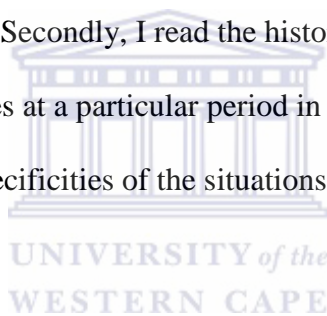
### CONCLUSION

#### **The Micro-Politics of Knowledge Production**

This project followed postcolonial studies in histories of Southern African anthropology whose focus increasingly recognised the need for a more Africanist approach to the history of anthropology in the region. Lyn Schumaker's influential *Africanising Anthropology* called for a more field-oriented study of the works of anthropologists that favoured analysing how specific contexts in the field influenced their work and methodologies. One important aspect in this historiography has been an increased focus on African assistants and informants, their roles in knowledge production, agency in the field and, significantly, attempts at recovering their identities. Of particular use in this project is Pamela Reynolds' suggestion for the need to study not only the relationships between anthropologists and their assistants, but equally to research the relationships between anthropologists and informants, and informants and assistants.

This project applied these general concepts to the study of the work of the anthropologist Godfrey Wilson, his assistant Zacharia Mawere and three informants Xavier Kofie, Mulenga Bisiketi and Duncan Chanda during research at Broken Hill between 1938 and 1941. Using a close textual reading of Godfrey's and Zacharia's fieldnotes held at UCT's African studies library, mostly concentrated on the nearly untouched Bemba texts which only one other researcher has engaged with, the project studied these relationships through a biographical study of Zacharia Mawere and the three central informants and how their particular life

histories affected their relations with the anthropologist in the field. The project adopted a micro-historical approach that sought to recover the agency of these Africans in knowledge production through a recovery of their individual histories as stories in their own right. In foregrounding the life histories of these hitherto unknown actors in knowledge production in a particular project, I have sought to do two things. Firstly, taking the suggestion for a more Africanist approach to histories of anthropology, I sought to argue for their agency in knowledge production in this specific knowledge project, by arguing for their influence in Godfrey's research at Broken Hill. Through this biographical approach therefore, what this project sought to do was reflect on wider issues of knowledge production between an anthropologist and how his fieldwork experience was affected by his informants across age, culture and personal background. Secondly, I read the histories of the informants as emblematic of African experiences at a particular period in history. From the details in the histories, we can then read the specificities of the situations Africans found themselves in and their agency in these situations.



Following a number of significant projects in this subfield, the recently published edited collection *Inside African Anthropology* reconstructed the various collaborations between Monica and a range of assistants and informants at a number of field sites in South Africa and Tanganyika. In writing about the latter, the study also included outstanding insights into Godfrey's work in Tanganyika between 1935 and 1938, and in particular his rich working relationships in the field with his main assistant Leonard Mwaisumo as well as other informants like the rainmaker Kasitile. As Marsland has observed, Godfrey was able to forge close ties with these male informants due to shared masculinities including pursuits of male activities. While *Inside African Anthropology* highlighted the complexity of Monica and Godfrey's fieldwork experiences and of the engaging life histories of their assistants and



informants, it equally marked how much more we needed to know about Godfrey's fieldwork experiences and his assistant and informants at Broken Hill. One of this thesis's claim to significance is therefore in filling this gap. Additionally the thesis hopes to contribute to growing interest in Godfrey's research in Northern Rhodesia.

Godfrey's informants at Broken Hill were on average 24 years old. Like Zacharia, Xavier, Mulenga and Duncan, all the informants were migrant labourers in so far as they had left their original home villages in search of work in the emerging towns in Northern Rhodesia. Except for Zacharia, who was Ngoni and interviewed mostly non-Bemba informants, nearly all of Godfrey's informants, including the three men discussed in this thesis, were Bemba.

It is probably because of this that Godfrey hired Zacharia, a Nyanja speaker who worked mostly with non-Bemba speakers. Zacharia was born in Fort Jameson between 1907 and 1919. He had received his education at Mwami and Livingstonia Missions between 1931 and 1935. Before his work as an indigenous ethnographer working for Godfrey at Broken Hill, Zacharia had worked in his elder brothers' bakery at Fort Jameson. Zacharia was central to Godfrey's work at Broken Hill. He collected a large body of biographical data from at least five hundred informants, conducted hut censuses in several African residential areas including the railway compound, government farms, police camp and Pullon's compound. Due to the fact that Godfrey spoke Bemba and probably did not need an interpreter, the two seem to have worked mostly separately. However, Zacharia evidently went with Godfrey to the African dance competitions and acted as an informant on several such occasions. Zacharia also wrote on Ngoni marriage and relations between men and women in town as well as the pooling of money among Africans.

The most central of Godfrey's informants in Northern Rhodesia was Xavier Kofie, whose relation with Godfrey spanned nearly the entire duration of Godfrey's period in Northern Rhodesia. Born in Mpika in 1916, Xavier was educated at several mission schools. He worked in Mazabuka, Lusaka and was working as a teacher at the time of their meeting in Livingstone in 1938. Xavier was Godfrey's initial language tutor, a good one if we consider that, just a month after the language learning began, Godfrey was able to converse and write adequately in Bemba. Xavier's life history is more detailed than those of other informants including Duncan and Mulenga.

Intimacy and a good engagement between Godfrey and his informants were enabled by Godfrey's egalitarian attitude towards Africans, which must have been influenced by his strong Christian background and Marxist orientations. Interactions between Godfrey and his informants reveal a changing range of relationships in the field. Whereas the initial fieldnotes between Godfrey and Xavier showed formal language learning, later ones reveal a shift to intimacy and ease reflected in discussions on sexuality, laughter and friendship. Xavier's personal background, in which he had had contact with Europeans such as missionaries, could obviously speak good English, and was evidently extroverted, also influenced the ease with which the two related.

On the other hand, Godfrey's fieldnotes at Broken Hill with other informants like Mulenga and Duncan, while still reflecting an ease of relationships between Godfrey and his informants, indicate less conversation and therefore more limited interaction. This is understandable given the magnitude of the task of collecting hundreds of biographical details. Additionally, the interviews at Broken Hill are conducted when Godfrey has finally started his research. They are conducted within the Broken Hill mine compound, mostly in in the

huts of Godfrey's informants. There is less laughter and teasing compared to the notes of Xavier's conversations with Godfrey. As Marsland and Hansen have suggested, participant observation in the racially charged space of the Broken Hill mine where the colour bar was staunchly observed under the watchful eyes of racist whites must have made things more difficult for Godfrey. It was easier for the anthropologist to be less constrained by the colour bar in rural areas than in towns, and definitely easier in Livingstone than in the mining towns where racial tensions were more severe. This is why at the very beginning of Godfrey's appointment as director of the institute; the trustees had opposed his plans to work in urban centres, preferring him to work in the rural areas.

### **Intellectual Colonialism, Collaborations and Fieldwork Complexities: Reflections on Godfrey's Work**

Within what framework might we analyse the relationships between Godfrey, Zacharia, Xavier, Duncan and Mulenga? Major frameworks in studying relationships between anthropologist, assistants and informants include intellectual colonialism, collaboration and, increasingly, approaches that embrace the complexities and heterogeneity of fieldwork experiences.

While the framework of intellectual colonialism proposed by Sanjek has now been largely disregarded as having been too pessimistic in not recognising that indigenous cultural brokers had agency and were not simply passive providers of information, I found suggestive his remarks regarding 'anthropology's hidden colonialism' in so far as anthropologists did not adequately acknowledge the contributions of their assistants and informants. As I have demonstrated, Zacharia and Xavier were significant others during Godfrey's research at Broken Hill. And yet nowhere in the published text did Godfrey indicate that he was assisted

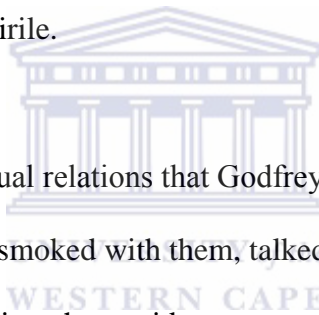
by Zacharia, who collected a large body of work in Broken Hill, or that his language learning was enabled by Xavier. As others have noted, this silencing of dependence in the field by anthropologists was a key part of the disciplinary ethos of social anthropology at that time.

Whatever the reasons, Godfrey's silencing of Zacharia Mawere and Xavier Kofie signifies the unequal relations in knowledge production between anthropologists and indigenous cultural brokers. It is precisely these unequal relations that militate against thinking of knowledge production in anthropology as 'collaboration' between the anthropologists, on one hand, and assistants and informants, on the other. Collaboration is an overly optimistic term to use for the range of relationships in knowledge production in colonial disciplines such as anthropology; the term suggests a relationship of equality or consensus among all parties involved, which was not the case here. I therefore suggest that we redefine the concept of 'collaboration' to accommodate the inequalities and tensions that the triangulation of relationships between the anthropologist, the interpreter and the informants were fraught with.

In thinking about Godfrey's work, I found suggestions by a number of scholars, including Schumaker and Reynolds, that we should examine these relationships within the contexts in which they were performed. Their context-based approach is one that reflects on the complexities of these relationships by locating them in the wider socio-political environment. I therefore accept Talal Asad's suggestion that we must locate histories of anthropology in the ideological contexts in which British social anthropology was born and mushroomed

especially in the interwar period that hinged on ideologies of race and hierarchical ordering of society along racial lines.<sup>227</sup>

These unequal relations of power can be seen in the emergence of new African masculinities within the urban Rhodesian landscape. According to Morrell, colonialism introduced new forms of masculinity in the African landscape, ones that were intertwined with work. But at the same time, the ‘hegemonic’ form of masculinity in urban Northern Rhodesia was European, seen through unequal work relations where Europeans had better jobs and wages. These urban experiences shaped the constructions of masculinities that form the informants’ narratives including having good expensive European clothes; living in town itself seems to count as claim to been male and virile.



It is within these contexts of unequal relations that Godfrey’s relations between with Africans were formed. Arguably, while he smoked with them, talked their language and visited them in their homes, when consider against these wider contexts, Godfrey was still a member of the dominant group.

### **Writing a More Africanist History of Anthropology**

This project has sought to contribute to a growing literature that has sought to write a more Africanist historiography of the social sciences in Africa by highlighting the contributions of African interpreters and informants in knowledge production about Africa. While seeking to highlight the agency and contributions of Africans in knowledge production, this body of

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<sup>227</sup> Talal Asad, ‘Introduction’ in Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973).

work has equally sought to recover the identities of African knowledge workers, as in this particular case study.

Scholars who have been engaged in these recovery efforts have generally remarked on the difficulties of sources of information for their subjects. This is because, as we have seen already, scientists and anthropologist did not always write about their assistants and informants. When they did, as Nancy Jacobs has argued, such fieldnotes did not usually have much personal detail of the assistants or informants.<sup>228</sup> While Godfrey's fieldnotes had biographical details of his informants that was unusual for the time, the ways in which the details were mediated by his research agenda present specific methodological challenges. Godfrey Wilson's data were collected for specific ends, such as wider relevance to his research whose focus was on working and urban experiences of his informants. Godfrey's main interest was their work/ labour migration history, date of birth, first tax, how many years in town, how often back to the village. There are therefore fractures in the information, represented by major silences in the life histories of the informants. Their end with their work histories at the time Godfrey interviewed them. The implications for a project that seeks to recover agency and identities of these subjects are the frustrating, marked silences in the narratives including the life histories of Godfrey's informants after 1940 when Godfrey stopped his research.

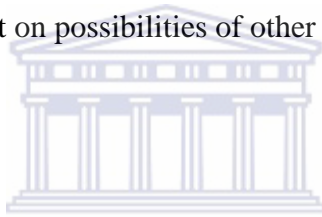
The problem of limited sources in which we are forced to depend on the fieldnotes of social scientists which were collected in specific contexts and for particular purposes then leads us to reflect on the kind of narrative that we tell of African informants and assistants. In the case of Zacharia, Xavier, Duncan and Mulenga, what I have outlined are histories of labour

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<sup>228</sup> Jacobs, 'Servants to Science', 3.

migrants and not really narratives of individual lives. In so doing, I have in a way recast these men within the same frames in which they were known by colonialists, colonial administrators, compound managers and, I might add, the anthropologist – as migrant labourers. In doing so, I wonder if projects for the recovery of agency and identities of African knowledge workers do not potentially lead to the reproduction of colonial and racially constructed social knowabilities.

This difficult then necessitates a methodological reflection on rewriting a more Africanist history of anthropology in Southern Africa. One way of overcoming this problematic is of course that we should take the suggestion to ‘read the archive against its grain’, but what would be more helpful is to reflect on possibilities of other sources to complement the archival materials.



A more Africanist approach to histories of anthropology, especially those that seek to recover the agency of indigenous assistants, need to go beyond anthropologists’ fieldnotes and texts as sources. At the time of Godfrey’s research, Zacharia, Xavier and Duncan were all in their early to mid-twenties, meaning they would be in their late nineties if they were alive. The possibility that their offspring or offspring’s offspring are still alive is a certainty. Later narratives would open up useful and alternative insights not only into the lives of Zacharia, Xavier, Duncan and Mulenga but hopefully about their working relationships with Godfrey Wilson.

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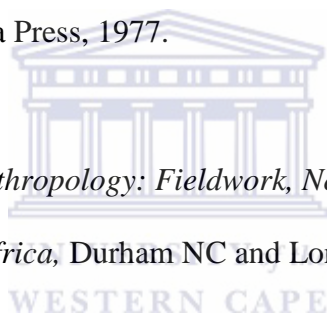
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## Appendix: Map of Northern Rhodesia



Source [http://www.greatnorthroad.org/elements/media/maps/northern\\_rhodesia\\_1948.jpg](http://www.greatnorthroad.org/elements/media/maps/northern_rhodesia_1948.jpg)