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The Locality of Chieftainship: Territory, Authority and Local Politics in Northern Malawi, 1870-1974

Davies, M.E.

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Author: Davies, Mary

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CHAPTER 2

Infrastructure and Indirect Rule: Constructing the boundaries of political space in northern Malawi, 1904-1943

“What Chikulamaembe says is true. Our forefathers always worked together in the past but, since the Europeans came, things have become difficult”.¹

Introduction

The thirty years running up to the implementation of indirect rule in Nyasaland (1933), and the decade afterwards, was a time in which African societies’ relationship to space embarked on an intense period of change. This was a period in which the indigenous economies of northern Malawi were hit hard by ecological disasters such as the rinderpest epizootic, by plague and influenza which wiped out huge numbers of people, and on account of the heavy involvement of northerners in the East African Campaign of World War One. These significant new economic and social pressures wrought on the population during this period of time forced a large number of the male population into labour migration. Firstly they went to Livingstonia, the largest mission in the area, but by the time the hut tax was introduced in the north in 1906, they were departing “in all directions”.² Yet this period was not only characterised by disaster and disrepair, it was one which had a formative effect upon structures of local authority, the definition of internal territorial boundaries, and the development of a closer link between chiefs and the land.

During the second decade of the twentieth century, running alongside the more visible struggles of the administration over hut tax collection, war recruitment and famine prevention, a process involving the tribalisation of African space – or, a spatialisation of tribal identity – began to take place. It was a process which discursively and practically wedded the “appropriate” tribal chiefly stories and their practices of governance to the land for the first time. This process is useful to understand as we explore the ways in which Timothy Chawinga built his authority several decades later. The battles which he fought over boundaries, the “irresolvable” contestations he involved himself with over history, and the construction of new rights to the resources in his area, all of which were crucial to his legitimacy, had their roots in this period where customary authority attained a distinctly spatial quality.

Some thirty years ago Chanock already observed the misguided connection which had been made by the colonial legislators in Central Africa at this time: that rights in land must be “derived from the political authority”³ found to be in charge in a particular area. For the administrators this assumption was useful as it enabled them to charge these political authorities with responsibilities for the control of labour and agricultural practice; ways of managing people and production which were vital for ensuring the success of colonial territoriality in the early twentieth century. These were a set of responsibilities which would be institutionalised under the District Administration Native Ordinance (DANO) of 1912. Before indirect rule formalised the relationship between tribe and space, it had already been articulated. Amongst the most important element introduced at this time was the way in which

these new responsibilities entitled chiefs to pass judgment upon who was a “native” and who was a “stranger”, creating a situation “where access to land was contingent on chiefly approval”.⁴ Whilst this had fewer implications when land was relatively plentiful, it is a dynamic which has played a significant role in conflicts over land in more recent history.

This process of bestowing these new responsibilities upon chiefs unfolded gradually however. Whilst these shifts simmered away on one level, at another the first two decades of the twentieth century in Nyasaland still represented a time of great opportunity for various other independent African voices to emerge. Having forged new links to imperial capital and mission education some new “grand figures” did find chances to gain authority. Especially if they could read and write, such people could gain considerable respect as they were able to “quickly pass for an oracle” within their communities; these big men’s prestige, if they learned “how to maintain it, kn[ew] no bounds”.⁵ Even after the DANO had been introduced there was still a lot of room for such figures to thrive, especially in the northern part of the country where access to education was so much greater.

When the Native Administration Native Ordinance was eventually passed in 1933 and these other voices were effectively silenced within the preferred dynastic narratives of the selected “Native Authority” chiefs they did not simply disappear. Hierarchies had been laid into the landscape throughout this time: among the “royal” clans; between neighbouring chiefs; and between religious authorities, political authorities and economically powerful actors. These would be dug up to form the basis of the many battles and contestations over space and custom throughout the period of indirect rule, during the process of decolonisation, and in post-colonial Malawi where “first comer” claims to indigeneity gained legitimacy as a way of contesting land access.⁶

The silencing of alternative authorities *within* the landscape of Hewe, and the obscuring of local historical geographies, which had no literate means of representation, certainly worked to Timothy Chawinga’s advantage. He came to power at a time when the colonial administration was still wedded to the idea of using dynastic histories wherever it was possible. Once the Katumbi chieftainship had eventually been granted the status of native authority it found itself in a powerful position in the regional landscape of politics after several decades of anonymity. With the help of educated allies the Katumbi clans developed a viable set of historical materials which were pliable and could be powerful as they came to compete in the political spaces forged by indirect rule. Another part of the reason why these royal narratives gained influence has to do with the colonial infrastructure. The roads, trading centre and recruitment centres, which from the 1930s began to be focused around the headquarters of the native authority, all helped to centralise the chieftaincy in the landscape.

This chapter will consider the context into which Timothy Chawinga emerged and began to practice his territorial behaviour. His predecessors and the policy reforms which were introduced in the twenty years before his crowning played a significant part in setting him up to develop his strategy to “affect, influence or control resources and people” in the area of Hewe;⁷ a strategy that would be effectively used by Chawinga to gain wealth and power up until the early years of independence. The chapter will consider the geographical and political infrastructure that formed the basis on which Chawinga built up his authority.

Part one. A dialogue between textual and physical space

Shaping a body of knowledge

As was shown in the previous chapter, the production of written histories was important in assisting imperial ambition to go beyond simply possessing space with an “appropriating gaze” to controlling it physically by mapping and naming it.⁸ Across the continent, at this time of early colonial exploration, “modern territorial practices” enabled a dialogue “between textual and physical space through which [...] territorial units [...] were forged”.⁹ This involved more than just mapping space, which was not the end goal. Populations needed to be fixed and controlled within this space for the strategies of territoriality to be effected; after all, and to reiterate Sack, human territoriality as an approach only works to “affect, influence or control resources and people” if those wanting to use it have control over an area.¹⁰ Colonial administrations took part in these processes, seeking to “fix the population in spaces under [their] jurisdiction, first on paper and then in physical reality, so as to facilitate their movements and activities”;¹¹ this was most commonly done in the first instance through census taking and tax collection.

Population movements, unfamiliar naming practices,¹² and shifting residential patterns were conducive neither to census making nor to tax collection. Furthermore, not all political structures seemed so easy to pin down within these dynamic spaces. In this sense the pursuit of “identifying tribes” and their political leaderships, through which these colonial territorial practices could be mediated, was crucial to their effectiveness. In doing this, an area which might have been characterised by a less “stable” or “fixed” identity was given boundaries and a name, and was now defined as a particular “socio-geographic space”.¹³ These territorial techniques, suggests Mazarire, were the “most useful means of establishing settler hegemony”.¹⁴ Crucially, this process of framing and naming space also had the effect of obscuring local historical geographies and, henceforth, the “spaces and practices of the non-literate peoples”¹⁵ became hidden within the “textual spaces of colonial bureaucracy”.¹⁶

However, whilst the dialogue between textual and physical space was at first articulated by the hegemonic voices of missionaries, colonial surveyors and ethnographers, these territorial units were not set in stone with the first arrival, and first cartographic expressions, of Europeans; the dialogue about them was, and remains, ongoing. From 1904 to 1933, the early years of colonial administration in Nyasaland before the Native Administration Ordinance definitively demarcated “boundaries to conform to tribal distribution”,¹⁷ ideas about political geography in the colonies were in fact shifting all the time. Practical considerations related to the appropriate size of governable units, the impact of ecological and political events, and the preferences and workload of individual colonial officials all had a dynamic effect upon the administrative framework in which African societies were categorised. Furthermore, as the previous chapter already hinted at, the forces shaping space were also mediated by local voices whose own power to contribute to the dialogue ebbed and flowed throughout this period.

There were various entry points to this official discussion about space. The most commonly consulted set of knowledge about local traditions, history and key personalities were contained in the district books of officers working most closely with the population. Whilst much of this information was passed down from one district official to another, debates around the validity and “truth” of this information were common. In the remote places of northern Nyasaland where a handful of officers undertook “incessant travelling” over vast distances,¹⁸ and received little support from their superiors in the south,¹⁹ they relied greatly upon local people to help them practically and advise them politically.²⁰ On account of the vast areas that officers had to manage and the very rapid turnover of staff,²¹ hand-over notes became a vital

way of orienting new arrivals to the diverse political and cultural landscape they found themselves having to administer;²² “I would quote from the notes of my predecessor left for my guidance”²³ wrote the District Commissioner Karonga in 1929 regarding aspects of native administration in the north, and this was a common place of reference. Being able to contribute to such a body of knowledge could therefore be a significant entry point to the shaping of political space at this time.

From an early stage Africans were complicit in constructing the spaces of administration, either on account of this close relationship with mission or colonial staff or as dissenting voices to the narratives which were rapidly becoming “official”. All began to realise the importance of being represented in these historical narratives and sought arenas in which they could make themselves heard. Some were given this opportunity at the official commissions which were set up before significant pieces of legislation were put in place. The Land Commission (1928-1931) and the Bledisloe Commission, a Royal Commission set up in 1937 to examine the possibility of closer union between Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, both offered new chances for the definition and classification of certain spaces to be debated.²⁴ As local voices found for themselves influential intermediaries or learned for themselves the value of crafting “historical raw materials” to their advantage they used these platforms and forums for discussion to challenge and contest the history which shaped the territory in which they acted.

Competing voices in the dialogue: patterns of power at the dawn of colonial rule

In the previous chapter, a discussion around the highly mobile nature of the *Balowoka* chieftaincies in the pre-colonial period presented that, to some extent, the integrity of the Katumbi Royal Dynasty was preserved because of this ability to move to “places of safety” throughout the turbulent latter half of the nineteenth century. Unforeseen consequences of the clan’s movement out of danger into the hot dry valley of Malambo to the west of their settlement in Hewe was that they were also moving out of the area that was to be demarcated as the Nyasaland Protectorate in 1907.²⁵ Across this new border, and now firmly under the jurisdiction of a different colonial territory [at this stage administered by the British Central Africa Company], the Katumbi chieftainship raised little interest for the nascent British administration. Scottish Presbyterian missionaries who had come touring these areas at the turn of the century record almost nothing about the figure of Katumbi and their journals give no sense that he retained any influence in the area of the Hewe Valley. The chieftainship’s apparent physical absence perhaps understandably equated to an absence of an established authority in the minds of missionaries and colonial surveyors, and Hewe was recorded rather as a place lacking in any strong leadership and presenting no significant presence as far as established Tumbuka chieftainship was concerned, if indeed anything was recorded about it at all.

Prior to 1912 the colonial government had yet to fashion a hierarchical framework, in which chieftaincies were used differentially to carry out separate tasks. As such, there were no substantial implications derived from Katumbi’s “absence” from the political landscape; chiefs had little to gain or lose from being associated with a particular space in this scenario. At this stage the northern most regions of the Protectorate, of which Hewe formed a part, were supervised in a rather arbitrary, even casual manner. The government relied upon the assistance of missionaries from the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland who provided opportunities for work and education from 1878, and the British South Africa Company (BSAC) who began collecting taxes on behalf of the government from 1891.²⁶ These activities did have implications. The earliest written histories of Hewe, for example, were

produced on account of these encounters, and they did have an influence on the representation of certain figures. Furthermore, with their minds on Christianity and commerce rather than administration, the activities of the Mission and BSAC also had the effect of elevating certain less historically important actors from relative obscurity as their areas became small centres of trade and education.

Two major events took place in 1904 that would change the stakes, and would mark a shift in how local authority was recognised and accumulated in Hewe. Firstly, a small mission-run school was built in the village of Mwachibanda in the northern most part of the Valley. Secondly, a government Boma was built in Karonga, enabling the first official visit to Hewe by a colonial official who came to tell the Katumbi chieftainship and his headmen “about his work as a Government Agent, and that his people must pay three shillings as tax to the Boma”.²⁷ Both of these events reshaped the geographies of opportunity in Hewe, and prompted a new set of priorities for the Royal family who had to begin work on becoming more visible in the landscape.

A threat in the landscape, the rise of Headman Mwachibanda

As has been explored, the Livingstonia Mission has been responsible for the production of some very powerful hegemonic visions of chieftaincy in northern Nyasaland. Aside from the narratives which they promoted and authenticated in print (see chapter one), another way in which these hierarchies were developed and perpetuated was through the new infrastructure which the mission brought to local communities. When the missionaries arrived in Hewe they initially interacted with headman Mwachibanda, who presided over what they considered to be a fertile and productive land.²⁸ Situated at the confluence of two rivers, the Hewe River and the Chisimuka stream, Mwachibanda village lay in a valley nestled amongst hilly terrain where alluvial soils accumulated. Its relative altitude and lack of tsetse fly meant that cattle thrived and people kept large herds. For these reasons it eventually became known locally as “Greenland”.²⁹ Deriving this reputation from its abundant harvests it was a place missionaries had been drawn to. Crucially, Mwachibanda had been astute enough to welcome the missionaries permanently into his area by granting them a plot of land on which they could locate their school; this was a project which others in the Valley, including the recently “returned” Katumbi Chipiri, are said to have been reluctant about.³⁰ Many people remembered its past glory that “this area [of Chisimuka] was important, people were friendly, welcomed the missionaries and accepted Christianity very well.”³¹

The prestige bestowed upon headman Mwachibanda for having one of the first mission primary schools in the region established on his land was no small matter; it facilitated his fame not only in the local area of Hewe and Nkamanga but fashioned a reputation for him in the eastern province of Northern Rhodesia, and from as far and wide as the students of the school were being drawn from. So successful was this decision to associate with the mission at this early stage that at the dawning of Indirect Rule it was Mwachibanda’s name which was known throughout the region, not so Katumbi’s who was barely recognised as being more senior. The school presented the people of Hewe a new possibility of accumulating knowledge, wealth and status, quite away from the traditional ways that had been previously only open to men of ritual or chiefly prestige. By taking a more independent position within commercial and mission networks Mwachibanda was in a good position to “undermine existing practices [of power] and open the way for the imposition of modern ones”.³²

As plans for further infrastructure and markets were discussed by colonial and business interests, it increasingly made sense to locate such facilities at this new focal point. With no

visible ritual or residential base in the Valley it seems likely that the Katumbi chiefs merited no special prioritising in the eyes of the administration. Honouring a barely visible seniority by locating business at Katumbi's headquarters was not an important factor as the Africa Lakes Corporation looked in 1912 for a place to set up shop in Hewe that would make good business sense. This shop, one of the Mandala Store franchise, offered the possibility of purchasing good quality salt, cloth and iron hoes to people in the area for the first time. The shop and school enticed people from far and wide.³³ It clearly retained its importance well into the 1920s; when the store was burned down sometime around this time it only relocated a small distance away to a place called Kaphumphu in the valley between Chisimuka stream and the Hewe River. It was said that at this time, "a very large village had been established" in Chisimuka, "where people came from Muyombe and Malambo [in present day Zambia] to trade".³⁴ Whilst there is no evidence of other stores opening in Hewe until the 1930s there would certainly have been an increase in trading activities in the wider region. It is clear that the area of Chisimuka maintained its position regardless, and because of this it became a large settlement. Already a highly productive part of Hewe the commercial attention which was focused upon it enabled local markets to develop and thrive; Mwachibanda benefited greatly from this, accumulating further wealth and prestige.³⁵

These infrastructures also had an effect on the community immediately surrounding them. Foremost was the privileged access to education which it suddenly provided. Many of the early pupils of the village school were from the Chisimuka area, and it is clear from the life histories taken in Hewe that a greater proportion of the people selected to go on to attend secondary education and technical training at Livingstonia Mission itself were from Chisimuka. These people were amongst those who were to go on to become the first raft of African teachers, carpenters, and civil servant clerks. Some would go on to play significant roles in the anti-colonial campaigns of the late 1940s and 1950s. To this day Chisimuka retains its reputation as a place of intelligent and skilled people. Clearly the growing importance of Chisimuka within Hewe, and certainly the prominence of headman Mwachibanda, had implications for a Katumbi chieftainship attempting at this stage to re-establish some sense of authority in the region, particularly in the eyes of the new government Boma at Karonga.

Though it is not possible to accurately date when Katumbi Chipili "returned" to the area of Hewe and began to campaign for his political recognition it is likely that it was prompted by this increased level of activity by the Mission and the BSAC, and on account of the new infrastructure that were introduced alongside them. Chipili's emergence in the area, which would become Nyasaland, had been necessary for the chieftainship to recapture a position of importance in this new colonial setting. Without further research being undertaken amongst the Katumbi chieftaincy now in Zambia it remains difficult to understand fully how, why, and precisely when, a split took place in the royal family. However, sometime in-between the end of the seventh Themba Mtengacharo's rule, a chief who had continued to practice his power in what would become Northern Rhodesia, and the ascent of the eighth Themba, Chipiri I, who chose to base himself in Hewe, a severance did occur which resulted in the existence of two separate but closely connected genealogies.³⁶ On account of this rupture, new lines of succession were introduced on both sides of the border. In any case, when the Government Agent visited Hewe in 1904 to take account of the population and their political organisation, some elements of the Katumbi chieftainship must have been found. Oral sources suggest that Chipili himself was met by a representative of the government, "Mr Wales", and it is certainly true that by the time the District Administrative Native Ordinance (DANO) was implemented in 1912 the Katumbi royal family were recognised as the most senior of headmen in the area, if not the most

influential. The frameworks of native administration, which were set in motion in 1912, did promise more benefits for the recognised chieftaincies. In light of these new opportunities, elements of the formerly 'invisible' and insignificant Katumbi leadership must have pushed for permanent re-location across the border, and to remain there as a settled presence.

Being recognised as the most senior headman in Hewe by the DANO did not guarantee an immediate transferral of prestige from other authorities who had gained status during the time of dispersal following the Ngoni wars. Mwachibanda, for example, maintained his reputation. Neither did it amount to an assurance of equality with other Tumbuka chiefs. The revived Chikulamayembe chieftainship was regarded as the most senior Tumbuka chief and was granted the position of 'Principal' amongst them. Themba Katumbi Chipili and his successor Yiteta struggled to assert their narratives of seniority during their rule and were quite unable to convince the government of their right to more formal authority in these circumstances.

The DANO did not have the same commitment to observing the (illusory) "customary practices" of tribal law and administration, as the policies of indirect rule eventually would. As such its organising principles were more oriented around practical concerns such as the size of territorial units and the convenience of their management. The comments made by O'Brien, the District Commissioner of North Nyasa, in a 1928 Annual Report summarise the administrative logic of the DANO with an example drawn from a discussion about the relationship between the role of headmen and the land: "Each section is divided into groups of villages under a group or area headman who in most cases is the owner of the land", however he goes on to say that "some areas are very large so are divided into two whilst other headmen although calling themselves the owner of the land, were so small that they were lumped together under the most influential headman available"³⁷. The direction taken by the DANO was that tribal histories would, as much as possible, be made to fit 'appropriately' sized territories. Despite having a specific historical identity, chieftainships which were not economically or practically suitable to administer, might be considered "too small" to be given their 'own' administration under this legislation. This logic worked against Katumbi whose small 200 square miles of jurisdiction - his territory in Nyasaland amounted to just half of his 'rightful' area with a large part of it having fallen under the jurisdiction of the government in Northern Rhodesia – provided a very weak claim to having his authority independently recognised.

A new process begins: chief of a tribe and chief over land

The period leading up to the implementation of the District Administration Native Ordinance in 1912 was marked by an atmosphere of political possibility for Africans in the northern region of the Protectorate. Perhaps the example which demonstrates these dynamics most clearly concerns the revival of the Chikulamayembe Dynasty in 1907³⁸ after which the "new chief and his educated supporters set about building an historical image for their new Tumbuka 'tribe'"³⁹. Whilst the DANO allowed for this image to be formalised within an administrative framework, and the position of the chief who represented this image likewise, it was ultimately the context of the political economy in the northern region which meant these formalities resonated with a large number of the population, and hence were transformed into sustainable political identities.

The period between the introduction of DANO in 1912 and 1923 was a particularly unsettled one for the people living in the northern region of Nyasaland. Administering this area in the early years of government had never been an easy task; its remoteness from European industry presented particularly serious problems for revenue collection. There were limited opportunities for natives to sell their labour, particularly in North Nyasa given its "peculiar

difficulties".⁴⁰ Apart from a couple of cotton estates run by Mr Maxwell, the Africa Lakes Corporation (ALC) was the only employer of native labour in the district at this time, and both seemed to prefer employing Africans from Rhodesia and Mombera (present day Mzimba district).⁴¹ In 1920, the Resident in North Nyasa wrote with concern that "the provision of suitable employment for natives near their homes remains one of the paramount problems of this district".⁴²

As an area generally "unsuitable for the production of saleable crops"⁴³ and with a lack of local market for them, there were even fewer ways for these natives to obtain money for hut tax or indeed for the payment of school fees, an increasingly desirable good in the north. It is argued by Vail and White that a combination of this increasing need to access cash – for tax, education, consumer goods – and decreasing opportunities to strategically deal with the "external" demands made on the rural areas by the market economy,⁴⁴ saw to it that there was "an abrupt emigration of the male population from northern Nyasaland with as many as 70 per cent of the men absent from home at any one time".⁴⁵

One of the most major of these "external" shocks was the impact of the First World War which saw the British increase its demands upon the local population.⁴⁶ Though perhaps Vail and White do not geographically nuance the impacts of the war enough, they are correct in identifying it as a watershed in the political as well as economic history of the northern region. As "men were drafted to serve as porters in the British army for periods of up to three years", they argue, a serious shortage of labour was caused which "adversely affected food production in the village gardens"⁴⁷ and increased the burden of production upon the women; a burden which was intensified as many villages were also required to provide extra food to feed the troops.⁴⁸ Indeed whilst it could be argued that the end of the war improved the "cash-flow" situation in the north, providing an injection of money into the local economies as disbanded soldiers and porters returned home,⁴⁹ this did not represent a long-term opportunity. Once this extra money diminished over the next couple of years the usual problems returned; high levels of emigration, absentee husbands and the lack of opportunities to work presented themselves, leaving the Boma with limited expectations for revenue collection once again.⁵⁰ The exhaustion of this "war wealth" was noted by the Africa Lakes Corporation (ALC) agent who confirmed that by 1920 there was "a considerable falling off in the amount of money spent in their stores too".⁵¹ It is not hard to imagine, therefore, a significant and increasing pressure on Africans from these areas to migrate in order to find work.

The figure of seventy per cent of employable men as being absent from their homes in the northern region does hide a rather uneven reality however. Counted among the reasons for this apparent "exodus" are the impact of a decline in cattle trade on account of bovine pleuropneumonia (in 1912) and Rinderpest epizootic (1919), this would not have affected Hewe as significantly as it affected the Ngoni areas to the south, given that cattle had never played a major role in their local economy.⁵² Nor did the recruitment of porters for the First World War have as devastating a consequence in these western parts of the region as it had done amongst the more commonly recruited Ngonde and lakeside Tonga. Nevertheless, whilst the change across the region may well have been uneven and geographically variegated, it can be said confidently that the opportunities for chiefly authority certainly increased over this time. The war routinized and increased the responsibility of chiefs to organise labour within their areas of jurisdiction. They were relied upon to recruit both carriers (tenga-tenga) and soldiers for the war effort from amongst their people, spreading "the propaganda, often calling meetings of their followers to encourage enlistment, clarifying when necessary, and cajoling their subjects into agreement".⁵³ Such participation foreshadowed the way in which chiefs would be used during

the struggle for independence. With a state creating anxieties about the implications of being conquered by another nation through this war, and what that would mean for African land, people “acquiesced in deference to their traditional leaders”⁵⁴ who represented a tried and trusted, if not ideal, context. They stuck with conservatism over change. This worked to the benefit of these traditional leaders, in whose hands they increasingly placed their confidence.

Once the war was over the role of chiefs did not diminish as the war wealth had. The expense of the First World War meant that a consolidated civilian government which could implement plans for economic development was some way off; indeed before 1920 “occupation was by no means yet synonymous with administration”.⁵⁵ Chiefs and headmen were asked to participate increasingly in local life by both the government and the population. The former required a more stable administrative presence to assist the “Thin White Line” – a fluctuating cadre of colonial officers⁵⁶ – by collecting taxes and attending to the “general conduct and welfare of village life”,⁵⁷ whilst the latter looked to these local leaders to attend to their interests in the uncertainty of the age. The chiefly elite were to “maintain order in the village while they were far away, working as labour migrants”,⁵⁸ to represent their interests in the home and in the fields. These changes in the political and economic landscape certainly bolstered opportunities for chiefs across the region to take more control over people, their land, and their resources where they had not had the prospect of wielding such authority before.

The DANO also created opportunities for appointed Principal Headmen such as Chikulamayembe, and their subordinate village headmen, “to keep the district officer informed of births, deaths, crimes, disputes and disturbances, and immigration”, as well as being able to allocate “village gardens and pasturage” under the direction of a colonial officer.⁵⁹ Year on year further duties were added and by 1924, after a major amendment had been made to the Ordinance, the power of the Principal Headmen grew significantly. Now able “to administer ‘sections’ made up of ‘village areas’”, a new spatial demarcation of power tied him ever closer to a bounded territory (for which there was a necessity to have a parallel narrative of authenticity). The 1924 Ordinance provided for the fact that these Principal Headmen:

*“could hear cases referred to them by the village headmen and could charge a fee; they could officiate at weddings and grant or refuse divorces; they were responsible for tax collection which conferred advantages in the control of labour; they issued beer licenses which brought a major industry engaged in by women under their jurisdiction; they controlled afforestation, which involved house building and much local industry; and they acquired for the first time clearly defined powers over village headmen, with profound consequences for the allocation of land”.*⁶⁰

Vail and White conclude that these responsibilities not only bolstered chiefly authority but, in the northern province where an educated African elite was available to manipulate the narratives, they also “opened the way for a general acceptance of an identity and consciousness defined in terms of ‘tribe’.”⁶¹ The legislation of the DANO combined with the political economic context of these areas to enable a particular ‘tribal’ expression of territoriality. The dialogue between textual and physical space begun by earlier generations of travellers and missionaries continued to be articulated but now with a more explicit ethnic or tribal accent. It was a highly employable accent which enabled Africans – particularly the educated elites – to enter the dialogue more easily, revising stories about “native” territories along the way. These educated elites saw a new opportunity of gaining a more powerful voice through the DANO, and more specifically the local administrative councils which were set up as a result of the new legislation. With many of them leaving Native Associations and joining chiefs’ administrations a much

stronger “political alliance of traditional leaders and new intellectuals” took place in northern Nyasaland.⁶²

The DANO represented quite a different set of opportunities and constraints for people in the southern province, and especially the Shire Highlands. As the introduction highlighted, the impact of the Chilembwe uprising in 1915 – a response to the exploitation of African labour by estate owners in the region – saw to it that this legislation was used to a much greater extent to police discontent. On the whole Yao chiefs, who were “keen to distance themselves from Chilembwe”, were appointed as DANO headmen;⁶³ and it was the “rebellious” Lomwe immigrants from Mozambique who lost out. As Power has noted whilst these immigrants did have the choice to work for African headmen or European planters, in reality they were limited; they needed a tax certificate to undertake the work, and this had to be acquired through a chief or headman.⁶⁴ The introduction of DANO in the south contributed to a host of consequences which would play out over the next couple of decades, and culminate in bitter local contestations in the context of the nationalist struggle. In the northern region, by contrast, any discontent engendered by the appointment of certain headmen over others under the DANO might have created local flashpoints of conflict but did not pose too great a threat to stability. There was enough land, and a notable lack of social and economic differentiation in the north; a situation which meant that it took until the 1950s until any serious discontent against the native authorities manifest itself.

The spatial implications of the DANO: burying hierarchies within the landscape

Whilst the DANO did not bestow the same responsibilities upon native chiefs which the later indirect rule legislation of 1933 would, it did grant Principal Headmen certain privileges which would prove rankling for Katumbi chiefs who believed themselves equal or superior to their neighbours tipped for more significant positions. Chikulamayembe’s new privileges as Principal Headman (P.H) which were different from the paltry benefits Katumbi received caused tension within the relationship between these historically related families. One of the most egregious aspects of this legislation to Katumbi and his followers was Chikulamayembe’s new found ability to “call for carriers and arrest tax defaulters in Hewe”.⁶⁵ This Ordinance had a significant effect on the Katumbi chieftainships of both Chipiri I and Yiteta; by undermining their ability to control labour and production in their area and displacing their authority to “officially” meet out local justice the Ordinance dealt a serious blow to the reputation of these chiefs, which had already been re-imagined in the light of their long displacement from Hewe.

Lacking any recognition under the DANO, other than that of village headman, it was Katumbi Chipiri’s aim, and the continuing aim of the two chiefs who succeeded him, Yiteta and Dukamayere I, to claim before the colonial government an historical authority which they asserted had been misunderstood and passed over. One of the ways in which they did this was by resorting to accusations of deception directed at Chikulamayembe. They claimed that their rival chief had cheated them out of their rightful position during the period when plans for the DANO were being formalised and positions of chiefs decided. It is said that when the D.C O’Brien sent a letter from Karonga informing all the Tumbuka chiefs that a meeting was to be held at the boma to discuss their roles and position in the district, and in particular to discuss the idea of making Chikulamayembe Principal Headman, it mysteriously went astray before reaching Katumbi. The local stories make out that when Chikulamayembe received the letter “he told the messenger not to send the message to Katumbi until the next day. He started on his journey to Karonga and spent some days, on the third day the D.C. said you should be the one who is principal as Katumbi is not even here”.⁶⁶ Whether the intention was there to cheat Katumbi or

not, evidently he did not make it to the meeting and was marked down simply as a village headman.

From this time onwards Katumbi chiefs blamed Chikulamayembe chiefs for their inferior position. This motif of injustice is recounted continually and can be seen as one of the disagreements on which moral and political authority is fought. As borders became a powerful symbol of sovereignty and authority, conflicts over the accuracy of their demarcation became another central point of contestation between the two chiefs.⁶⁷ More stories emerged about how the colonial tools of territoriality were used by the chiefs to contest their narratives of historical seniority. Time and again throughout the colonial period the ownership of two villages, Chelanya and Kapemba, located within the border-zone areas between Chikulamayembe and Katumbi, was disputed. In some ways the place in which they were now to be found was a largely irrelevant aspect of the contestation; villages had neither been static in the past nor were they known as belonging within demarcated territorial boundaries. However, as soon as taxation was introduced as a way of tying authority to place, and place to the people, the first major contestation took place which flagged up how battles for authority oriented around new spatial forms of control.

Entering into the spatial dialogue as a way of “re-claiming” some authority in the situation of the DANO, Chief Chipiri Katumbi is said to have flagged up another historically unjust event between the two chieftainships. With the backing of his chiefs’ council he went to Karonga to give testimony to a story from the past which tried to demonstrate the cunning of Chikulamayembe. One Katumbi was said to have advised his chiefs Chelanya, Kapemba and Kalindamawe to carry some ropes to Chikulamayembe, the rope from Hewe was strong as a certain tree grew there which was suitable for such things. This, Chikulamayembe was happy with as it assisted him to make nets with which to catch animals.⁶⁸ When taxation began it was assumed that this rope giving tradition was in fact a form of tribute rather than a gift from a neighbouring chief and as such these villages started giving tax as well as rope to Chikulamayembe. By the time Katumbi began to claim that these people were in fact under him Chikulamayembe refused. After going to the provincial commissioner to discuss the matter it was decided that they should go to Katumbi and a boundary should be made. Thus began a long engagement over the “original” ownership of these villages.⁶⁹

After Chipiri died in 1923, his successor Yiteta brought some new tensions perhaps prompted by the increasing responsibilities given to Principal Headmen over their subordinates in the 1924 revisions to DANO. Neither Chipiri nor Yiteta had many responsibilities under the government, at this time such headmen were only directed to clear roads or build bridges, but the latter chief was active when it came for campaigning for the acknowledgment of the Katumbi chieftainship as historically important;⁷⁰ some suggest that he was in fact the first chief to be recognised by colonial officers, even if it was only unofficially.⁷¹ His chieftaincy spanned from 1923 to 1932 during which time several commissions were formed in which the history of land ownership and traditional authority came under the spot light. The 1929 North Nyasa Native Reserves Commission, part of the country wide Land Commission (1928-1932), was one such platform on which he could voice his disgruntlement, and officially put in a claim for independence from Chikulamayembe.

Yiteta’s bad behaviour in the eyes of the administration perhaps reflected his increasing frustration at not being recognised and from this time he is characterised as a troublemaker, “a little rat of a man”.⁷² D.C. O’Brien looked upon Yiteta’s claims as purely self-seeking, and an attempt to take advantage of the opportunity which the DANO offered chiefs to better their position. Yiteta on the other hand took this subservience to Chikulamayembe under the DANO

as humiliation and he insisted that he be placed under the authority of a non-Tumbuka Chief than face the dishonour of subjugation to his 'nephew': "Katumbi got so frustrated that he decided to visit Kyungu and offered to place himself under his authority. He could not stomach the idea of being a sub-chief to Chikulamayembe whom he considered to be historically his junior".⁷³ This, O'Brien considered as a tactic; knowing that he had no hope of succeeding with his "false claim" to seniority, he had planned out "an alternative scheme".⁷⁴ The request was not considered.

Both personality and practicalities had their part to play in this. Chipiri and Yiteta were not well educated, nor did they have a useful ally to articulate their demands for them, or the intellectual resources to give them leverage (see chapter one). Furthermore, these Katumbi chiefs found themselves ruling an area which was considered to be too small to be administered separately. The DANO practically did away with any expressions of leadership that did not match size of territory or type of chieftaincy that the colonial government wanted to deal with. These alternative narratives did not present a significant challenge to the official structure of native administration or alter the state-sanctioned subservience to Chikulamayembe which the Katumbi chieftainship found itself performing under; Katumbi would remain headman and Chikulamayembe would perform the role of his Principal until the dawning of indirect rule in 1933.

Even after the Katumbi chieftaincy had been granted the status of native authority, becoming equal under the law to his neighbouring chief, the psychological hierarchies which had developed during this time were to remain a humiliating tension buried within the relationship between Katumbi and Chikulamayembe, and to a lesser extent with Headman Mwachibanda, and they still have some resonance today.⁷⁵ This tension most frequently played out in ways which were articulated by spatial factors, with debates over borders and village ownership, something that the interaction between Chikulamayembe and Katumbi had rarely fought over in the past. Hierarchies were written into history by missionaries and early colonial techniques of rule as the previous chapter concluded, and these hierarchies became spatialised through the DANO. Tensions between Chikulamayembe and Katumbi can be seen borne out in discussions about shared borders, treasuries and courts throughout Timothy's reign (1943-73); what colonial officers describe as "petty jealousies" are in fact meaningful contestations that have resonance in local imaginations of chiefly power, even if they have become unrecognizable on account of their spatial articulation. These contestations will be explored in the next two chapters as the politics of Timothy's chieftainship is unpacked. Before this is done, a section will be devoted to a discussion of how the Katumbi chieftainship did eventually regain its place in the landscape and how the political and economic milieu developed into which Timothy Chawinga, the main protagonist, was crowned Themba.

Part two. The spaces of Indirect Rule

The end of the DANO and the politics of Indirect Rule

The 'local concerns' which seemed at first of limited importance to the efficient functioning of government under the DANO were given more credence after the First World War as chiefs were increasingly relied upon to administer local government. After some investigations it became clear that the administrative structure the DANO created was now barely effective. In one of the monthly North Nyasa District Reports from 1919-20 it was recorded that regular district councils had not taken place for two years and if headmen were even occasionally called

to report their work no record was ever taken of their activities or minutes taken of the meeting. In the district books attempts to call meetings were recorded as almost always a failure, and this was attributed to the fact that headmen were “indifferent and unresponsive”.⁷⁶

To some extent this “indifference” was not entirely about the system’s inherent flaws; it also had much to do with the political and economic difficulties of this time. Aside from the demands of war, the years 1919 and 1920 had seen influenza, plague and rinderpest put economic pressures on people in the north. In addition to this, the inadequate staffing in North Nyasa District tested the opportunity for regular and functional meetings whilst the physical terrain and lack of infrastructure put paid to the efficient collection of tax.⁷⁷ In order to mitigate these difficulties some amendments were made to the DANO within the first decade of its existence. There was a call to increase the responsibilities of chiefs within their own village areas. Furthermore, and for the first time, members who were not headmen but rather “representatives of the more educated and progressive classes of natives” were to be included within District Councils.⁷⁸ These amendments would not, however, prove long term solutions to the problem of “native administration” which was beset with difficulties relating not only to socio-economic context of early colonial rule but also to political jealousies and new hierarchies weaved into this context on account of the DANO itself.

District officials whose close interaction with communities allowed them to observe firsthand the troubling situation which the policy had incubated began to flag up the local grievances more systematically. The DANO, they argued, had set rather unsatisfactory arrangements in motion which were, though advantageous from an administrative point of view, “unquestionably a departure from native practice in the past”.⁷⁹ Officers working in the district of North Nyasa, long dissatisfied with the arrangements for native administration, cited the incongruities and “artificial nature” of the polities which the Ordinance imposed upon the people, “contrary to their customs”.⁸⁰ The new position of “group village headman”, required as a way of organising areas, was confusing and provoked jealousy as it seemed to encourage these selected headmen to think themselves of having a small chieftdomship. It was even said in one report that this system had predisposed these new group headmen to “despise the principal headman” whose authority over them they now disputed.⁸¹ “The title of group village headman, an “impossible and artificial” measure, was a confusing role for the people, especially when it came to the custom of land ownership.⁸² At the same time the heads of individual villages, who played an essential role in the administration of day to day life, often remained unrecognised as “village headmen at Law” by this Ordinance. All of these measures had the cumulative effect of undermining the Africans’ “interest in their own affairs”, so much so that they were described as “fatalistically lethargic in matters which concern them”.⁸³ Through these investigations it was concluded that the DANO could not provide a “satisfactory basis on which to build up an efficient system of native administration in the Northern parts of this territory”.⁸⁴

From 1929 the disgruntled district officials of Northern Province who had been complaining that the Ordinance had no future were satisfied. With the introduction of native courts in that same year at which the principal headman were given the responsibility of hearing civil cases the district commissioners’ calls for a new system to be put in place was finally heeded. This system, they had said, would only work if the local administration was “based upon native tribal institutions”, otherwise there would be no hope of the courts in particular being effective.⁸⁵ It was in light of all these changes that the claims coming from Hewe calling for independence from Chikulamayembe was given another hearing. O’Brien maintained his dislike for Katumbi Yiteta when these claims to be acknowledged as equal emerged from the 1929 North Nyasa Reserves Commission.⁸⁶ Eventually, however, even he would come to

acknowledge the historical importance of Katumbi amongst the *Balowoka* chiefs in the region. Several things would have to take place before this could happen though. Primary among them were the deaths of the old Chikulamayembe in 1931 followed shortly afterwards by Katumbi Yiteta in 1932; the new chiefs, and their Livingstonia Mission allies, would alter the balance of local power significantly. Their relationships with each other and the government reshaped the political boundaries in the northern Tumbuka areas significantly.

O'Brien had formerly been convinced of Chikulamayembe's sovereignty over the whole area from the lakeshore in the east to the border with Northern Rhodesia in the west. Cullen Young's 1923 book had been influential in this regard, as had O'Brien's genuine dislike for Yiteta who he had no intention of promoting. In an annual report in 1930, whilst considering the implications which indirect rule would have in these parts, he wrote that he was quite sure that it could be introduced without difficulty in North Nyasa, as the power of the two Principal Headman in this district, Chikulamayembe and Kyungu, were "universally acknowledged".⁸⁷ A change took place in the discussions amongst missionary elites, educated Africans and government officials in the north not long after this, however, which drove the impetus for a revision of these emphatic conclusions about northern history; this change can be noted in the 1932 publication of Cullen Young, *Notes on the History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga Peoples of Northern Nyasaland*.⁸⁸ In this publication some of his earlier conclusions about the hierarchy between Chikulamayembe and Katumbi, amongst other changes in tribal history, have been significantly altered.

In 1934 O'Brien became the first district commissioner of the new district of Mzimba which had been created through the merging of Chikulamayembe's Henga-Nkamanga area and Katumbi's Hewe area with the old Mombera District, then presided over by the main Ngoni chief M'mbelwa. Less than one year after he had confirmed Katumbi's subservience to Chikulamayembe under the original Native Administration Ordinance, O'Brien took this opportunity to overturn the decision. The short period in-between the introduction of the NAO and the meeting at Ng'onga is worth examining as a way of getting to the bottom of these shifts in appraisal of chiefly status; this can give some idea about the delicate balance between the production and use of historical narratives, and the politics of relationships between the mission and the chiefs.

New chiefs and the rise of non-chiefly advisors

Neither John Hardy Gondwe nor Zakeyo Dukamayere Chawinga had been in line to inherit their respective titles of Chikulamayembe (in 1931) and Katumbi (in 1932). Their chieftaincies represented a new era where education mattered more than hereditary right and progressive ideas more than laws of succession. It has already been noted at some length that the *Balowoka* chieftaincies were flexible and adaptable enough to easily accommodate new rules which conformed less to the inheritance structures which had variously managed the perpetuation of the Royal Dynasties, but rather more to the choices of powerful external interests. Both were mission backed candidates, the kinds of men that the government sought to install as chiefs. However, whilst the mission at Livingstonia had forged a cadre of men who were championed by the government as suitable chiefly candidates, it also promoted an unhelpful political ambition among them and their advisers; the influence which the Reverend Edward Bote Manda began to have on the new Chikulamayembe, John Hardy Zibange Gondwe, for example troubled the administration more than it reassured them.

Having been in poor health for several years before his death in 1931, the tenth Chikulamayembe, Mbawuwo Chilongozi Gondwe, had begun to lose control over the affairs of

his chieftdom; it was in this context that Manda began to increase his influence.⁸⁹ Under his pressure the “customary” successor of Chilongozi a man called Gogoti Gondwe was pushed to one side and the elders were persuaded to choose John Zibange Hardy Gondwe, to become the eleventh Themba. He was only 26 years old, and he was educated, he “knew white men and modern affairs”;⁹⁰ but he was pliable and susceptible to the ideas of Manda. In this way the radical minister began to use the Chikulamayembe chieftainship as his own instrument. In some ways the selection of John Hardy was also a boon for the Katumbi campaign, particularly once Zakeyo Dukamayere had replaced Yiteta. Both Manda and John Hardy wanted Katumbi to be recognised as of having historical importance in the region, possibly because it helped them with their claims for the much bigger project of “recreating” Utumbuka, a Tumbuka land to reflect an historical claim to a huge Kingdom and which would swallow up the Ngoni authorities in its wake.

At a meeting in Ng’onga which was held on 13th December 1933, it was hoped that various contentious issues could be resolved – including which of the chiefs could lay claim to the hotly contested villages of Kapemba and Chelanya. Dukamayere took with him a crack team of eight negotiators, amongst them the senior headmen Chembe, Zolokere, Chilikunthazi and Walutundu, as well as Daniel Kaira and the Rev. Levi Kaleya, both Livingstonia graduates and respected men. It was hard for John Hardy Gondwe to do anything other than admit to the administration that although Katumbi was not a senior chief to Chikulamayembe, he was indeed independent from him and he “had no objection to the fact that Katumbi should be independent and elevated to the position of Native Authority”.⁹¹ It was decided at Ng’onga that Katumbi should be promoted; he was designated his own section three, given a junior court of appeals, and allowed to report directly to the D.C.⁹² A clerk, Ben Mpitankhwakwa Munthali, and two messengers, Guza Ng’ambi and Mwambazi, were appointed to him, making his rise complete.

The importance in this overturning of inferiority, reclamation of lost prestige and statement of independence by Katumbi amongst the local community is acknowledged with the bestowal to Zakeyo, after his rise to Native Authority, of the praise name Dukamayere. Dukamayere refers to the action of jumping or overcoming witchcraft and trickery;⁹³ not knowing the reasons for the promotion, local people looked upon Zakeyo as being cunning enough to overcome the magical tricks which had hitherto undermined the chances of his predecessors.

In fact, in some ways they were right. Zakeyo was a more senior and salubrious character than his predecessor Yiteta. In many ways he even appears to have been a more conducive chief to work with than John Hardy, but he had been greatly assisted into the position by the personable figure of the Reverend Isaac Khunga. Khunga was a native of Hewe who had turned down his own chance to become a senior chief, Zolokere, in order to pursue a life in Christian ministry. He retained many advisory roles within his home area and with his concern for the well being of the population was regularly to be found around the place encouraging and counselling chief and commoner alike. It is likely that it was Khunga who played the major role in influencing the elders of the Katumbi Royal clans to select Zakeyo as the most suitable successor to Themba Yiteta; it is widely accepted that he was not selected through the usual, traditional, processes of election.⁹⁴

If a comparison is made between the personality and ambitions of Khunga and those of Manda it is not hard to see how much more palatable and trustworthy a figure the former was for the administration to work with. Khunga had been a strong campaigner for the restoration of the Katumbi chieftainship and for the unification of the area of Hewe and Malambo where the split of the royal family had created a separate Katumbi chieftaincy in Northern Rhodesia. He

had organised the appeal of Zakeyo Dukamayere with Kaira and Kaleya, in an effort to convince the D.C. to restore parts of Chikulamayembe's territory – most notably the villages of Kapemba and Chelanya – to Katumbi. Yet, his ambition seemed genuinely geared towards the welfare of the local population; he was a pastoral character, and had no political goal beyond the influence he could lend to the Katumbi chieftaincy. The goal of Manda, however, was much bigger than augmenting the local prowess of chiefs. For this reason he was seen by O'Brien as a more problematic presence, especially since the government Boma at Karonga was unable to keep such a watchful eye on activities in Henga and Nkamanga. Manda had developed a role for himself in this loose system of administration, playing a crucial role on account of the distance from the Boma and therefore "of necessity a liaison between Chikulamayembe and the D.C".⁹⁵ Not only was this bad practice, the D.C admitted in the 1930 annual report, this influence by the mission over local populations was "unfair on chiefs".⁹⁶

Manda's most ambitious plan had been hatched some time before the time when he began encouraging the young Chikulamayembe to expand his territory, and push to become paramount chief by establishing a Tumbuka chieftom in the heart of Ngoni country south of Nkamanga (see Vail and White). Manda had been collaborating for some years with others including the Hewe born Simon Masopera Gondwe, a former clerk and a character to whom the thesis will return later, to develop a strategy aimed at reconstructing what they claimed to have been a vast Tumbuka kingdom; this was revealed later during the 1940s when an investigation into the activities of Masopera Gondwe were undertaken by the District Commissioner H. C. Foulger. "Whatever the disguise Manda and Gondwe are imbued with the idea of deposing the Angoni chiefs and replacing them with the "original owners" of the country, harking back to the rather mythical "Karonga" who is reputed to have held sway over this country and as far as the Zambezi",⁹⁷ he wrote to his Provincial Commissioner in 1943. The Principal at Livingstonia admitted in the same year that whilst at Livingstonia Masopera Gondwe had undertaken a commercial course and then worked as a clerk from 1936 to 1940, he had at the same time been "he was the leading light of a little association which he called the Tumbuka Tribal Council or Association".⁹⁸

There had been no immediate objection to the idea that there existed Tumbuka chieftaincies south of Henga that might recognise Chikulamayembe as their chief. In light of the imminent change in legislation a thorough examination of Manda's claims was undertaken but once the Government was finally convinced that all Tumbuka authorities within the Ngoni territory were no longer known, any future attempts to "reunite" their people fell on deaf ears. "Claims fostered by E. Manda such as Nyanjagha on the Rukuru River, and the Baza people at Hora had been fully investigated and found to be entirely without support",⁹⁹ O'Brien recalled when the issue was discussed again in 1935. Various other of Manda's proposals of a similar vein, including his prompting of Chikulamayembe to challenge the British South Africa Company's right to the land in North Nyasa, were also invalidated; the D.C. reminding them that at that time "there was no Themba Chikulamayembe and no Kyungu, both had succumbed to the Angoni and Arab slavers [...] [they] received the Europeans with open arms as their protectors".¹⁰⁰

Their hopes for an enlarged territory had been raised by the North Nyasa Reserves Commission, where the idea for the creation of a distinct Henga District had been mooted. With a Boma located at Mburunje it was suggested that it include southern parts of North Nyasa District and northern parts of the Mombera District, and with no regards to tribal distribution the suggestion was to draw a line across the country.¹⁰¹ The provincial commissioner was quite happy to contemplate this idea as it would have created a much needed intermediary

headquarters in-between Karonga and Mzimba. However, once the policy of local administration was altered upon the introduction of the NAO, Native Authorities were to be strictly bounded according to tribal divisions and the chiefs of these units were to have authority only over people “who bore tribal allegiance to them”.¹⁰² It was in this context that the lack of wider recognition for Chikulamayembe was compounded. The people of Mwafulirwa, who had also had a long standing debate concerning their independence from the Themba, were given the opportunity to switch allegiance to Kyungu in 1931 and then eventually to become autonomous in 1932. There is little doubt that the constant “high handed” behaviour of Manda created this opportunity for Mwafulirwa. Annoyed by Manda’s arrogance, Murray, the provincial commissioner, had decided to penalise Chikulamayembe by allowing Mwafulirwa to separate from him and by bringing Chikulamayembe into Mzimba District.¹⁰³

Concerned about the backlash that this potentially unfair treatment would create for the Government, especially since the plans for a Henga District had also been put on hold, it was later decided that an apology for the confusion be issued and that a rest house at Njakwa in Henga be built as a small base from which Hewe and Nkamanga areas could be more closely administered. Having a district which only covered these areas, however, was considered completely out of the question. “The Chikulamayembe and Hewe units are so small” wrote the PC Northern Province, “that they do not demand a separate Boma to watch over them”.¹⁰⁴ He argued that a proposed new Boma in Rumphi, if established, would provide any officer stationed with such little work “that he would simply be a nuisance to Chikulamayembe supervising every trivial thing that he does”.¹⁰⁵ This arrangement, he said, also left Chikulamayembe free to return to North Nyasa District if he wanted; something which of course he considered far too shameful to even contemplate. The activities of Manda – who would continue to play a significant role in the administration of Chikulamayembe throughout the 1940s and an increasingly seditious one pressing for recognition of “the whole land of our ancestors”¹⁰⁶ – had caused anger to the administration and unsettled the traditional elders of Nkamanga. By 1935 the intense campaigning for change had settled down but the dialogue about these injustices continued on throughout the colonial period.

As opinion of Chikulamayembe went down in the context of indirect rule Katumbi’s steadily increased. Officers on the ground who dealt with border areas had been long of the opinion that a single system of administration common to all territories who shared boundaries was needed. With so much of the northern and central provinces of the Nyasaland Protectorate “adjacent to other British territory with identical tribes on each side of the border”¹⁰⁷ there was much sense in creating a compatible system. On account of this new arrangement which acknowledged that native territory could indeed straddle borders, chieftainships such as Katumbi’s, found a new chance to increase their authority.

With fresh perspectives driven by information collected from the Northern Rhodesian side of the border, O’Brien wrote to his Provincial Commissioner in the July of 1934 about the unfair situation that Katumbi had found himself in; it is, he said “the most blatant example of the unsatisfactory conditions brought about by adopting a purely artificial boundary to the Protectorate in the West...The bulk of Katumbi’s people have been cut off from him, leaving the chief with some 300 hut tax payers only within this district”.¹⁰⁸ His historical authority and ritual importance amongst the people in Hewe and Malambo were also brought into the picture; he is “now consulted concerning matters of headmanship and chieftainship by the Rhodesian Katumbi, and the Rhodesian Katumbi has approached the Nyasaland Katumbi on more than one occasion with a view to the alteration of the boundary including him within Nyasaland”.¹⁰⁹ The

attempt to make boundaries conform to the limits of tribal custom meant that Katumbi now became a chief with potential subjects across the international border.

The voices of colonial officials and the occasionally tense politics of administration in the north ought not to be forgotten as major contributors to the local debates about space. The contestations over the Northern Rhodesian and Nyasaland border in particular, where personal tensions and biases between the two local district administrations embedded themselves in the understandings of local history and politics of the adjacent native authorities is one example of how colonial officers ways of seeing land were taken onboard by chiefs and headmen, especially when it suited their own agenda. A memorandum discussion which took place on 1 October 1934 between the DC Mzimba and DC Lundazi, officers on either side of the inter-Protectorate boundary, demonstrates these dynamics. "It is a regrettable fact" so goes the memo:

"That the relationship between the D.Os in charge of these neighbouring districts has not always been as harmonious as efficiency and mutual understanding demands [...] it is apparent that extreme antipathy has existed. As is natural, this antipathy spread from the European officers to the chiefs on both sides of the boundary and the Rhodesian chiefs and Boma became obsessed with the idea of encouraging the watershed boundary with utter rigidity regardless of what hardship this may initiate upon natives hoeing and cultivating in its vicinity".¹¹⁰

This tension is reiterated in correspondence just a week or so later as DC Lundazi writes to O'Brien, the DC Mzimba:

"In the matter of the revision of the present boundary, perhaps I have not made it sufficiently clear that the attitude of my three chiefs has been taught to them by a jealous succession of officials, who, with an eye on the obligations of natives on this side of the boundary have not, perhaps, fully realized the difficulties in the way of the Nyasaland natives. In the matter of tax, guns, law etc... do you not think that difficulties would arise? An undefined boundary would be a release from supervision of the more lawless and taxless individual".¹¹¹

Furthermore, the production of political spaces within borderlands involved input from agents and institutions on the 'other side' of the boundary too. In Hewe, this was certainly the case; the lines which were drawn to the west of the Valley have been long negotiated lines and Northern Rhodesian officials and local communities alike played as significant a role in shaping these boundaries as those on the Nyasaland side. Northern Rhodesian attitudes to native customs and boundary demarcation were different from Nyasaland policies and this is reflected in the reports. This interaction of the colonial imagination with local political issues is vital to understanding how an area becomes "a place". Another aspect that needs to be considered is the interaction of colonial infrastructure with local geographies of power.

Part three. Places of power: how infrastructure reshaped chieftaincy

Resthouses, recruitment centres and remote places

Despite the new opportunities presented to the Katumbi chieftainship with the coming of Indirect Rule it is important to note that at this time Hewe was an area which had developed within it many places of power rather than a strong focal point which oriented solely around the Royal Family. As the colonial economy had gradually embarked upon capturing these peripheral areas it was rather in Chisimuka to where their attentions were drawn: crops were bought and

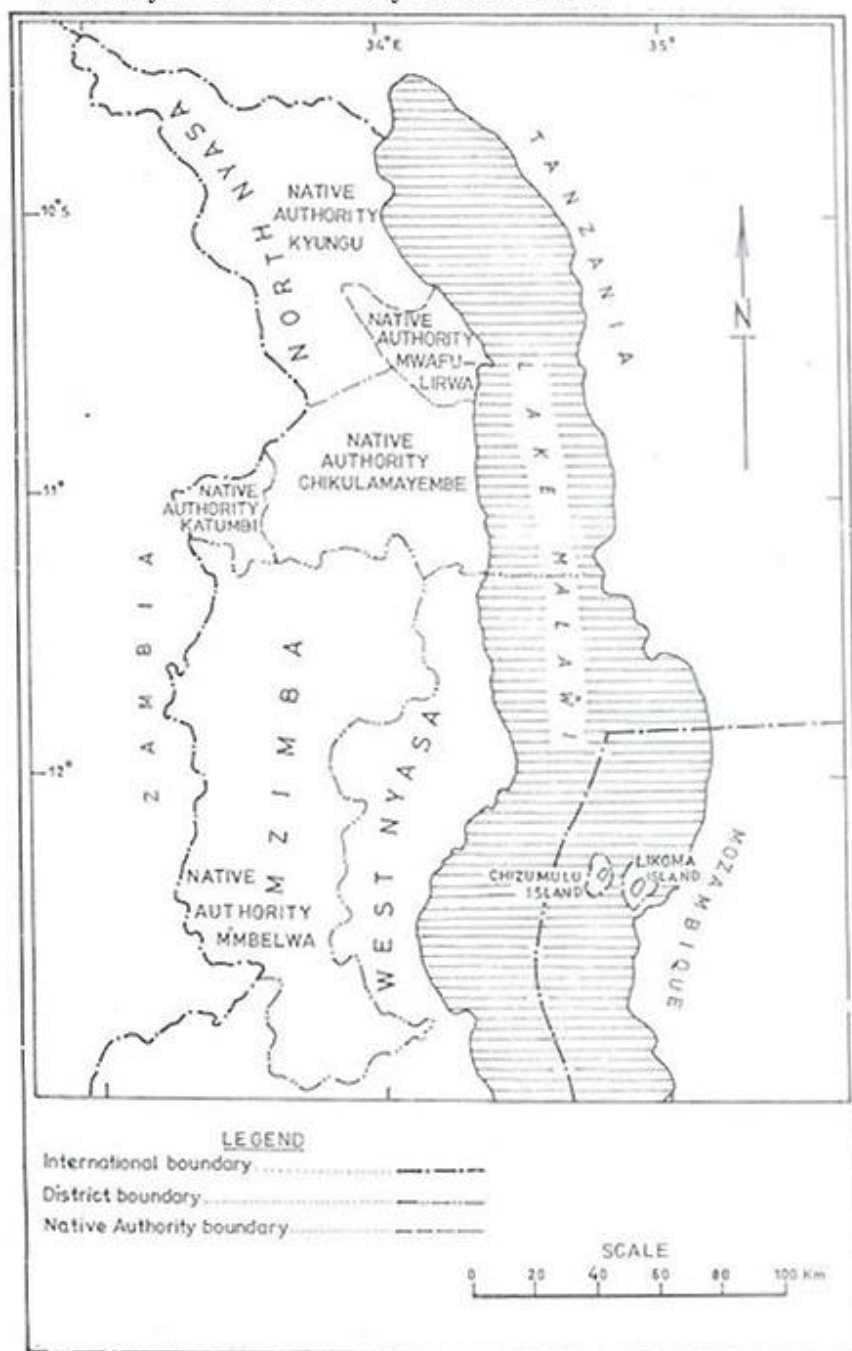
sold here, people were picked to go to school from here, and a lot of business was conducted here. Headman Mwachibanda had become a wealthy man, and his name had secured a fame that Katumbi could not easily equal. In contrast to the public presence of Mwachibanda, the Katumbi chieftaincy remained largely invisible in this new landscape based as it was in a private sacred space and dispersed in the different parts of the territory belonging to each of the royal clans. The chieftainship of Dukamayere, and henceforth that of the Katumbi Chieftainship, was therefore powerfully redefined and made “public” with the impact of colonial infrastructure. Roads, rest-houses and recruitment centres were developed in Hewe from the 1930s onwards and these infrastructures had the effect of reorienting and centralizing power within the Hewe Valley: the alliance of chieftaincy and mission education meshed powerfully at this time with a place that is newly defined by colonial infrastructure.

Whilst the administrative and territorial frameworks of the new Protectorate government reshaped power in Nyasaland in the ways in which we have described above, the people of Hewe experienced very few material differences in their lives up until the 1930s. Beyond the accumulation of individual wealth, the infrastructures and amenities which accompanied, or grew from, the broader economic changes of this time – specifically the growth in labour migration – were to have significant effects not only on the lives of those who managed and interacted with these facilities, but also upon the broader context of political struggle in Hewe. The rest-houses that accommodated migrants, the dispensaries that ensured their health for the journey ahead, and the canteens that fed them were all eventually established in Hewe, which had become not only a departure point for local people but also a common resting point for those coming from the south on their way to either Tanganyika or the Copperbelt in Northern Rhodesia.

By 1933 when the Native Administration Ordinance was introduced, and a closely monitored collection of taxation became increasingly feasible, it was rather through labour migration than agriculture that the majority of northerners sought to make the money they needed to pay for it and for the other commodities that were increasingly available, and desirable, to them. The people of Hewe were no exception to this. Gideon Luhanga’s first job was portering luggage for the Mandala stores to Karonga in a period sometime before 1930. He received “only 2 tambala” most of which, he complained, he had to give to the government in tax. Rather than continuing in this more localised work he decided to travel by foot to Tanganyika, to the Lupa Goldfields, whilst others too set about similar journeys to cut sisal or sugarcane in other parts of the country:

“Anyone was just going there. If someone was poor they would go. I heard I could make money there so I punished myself footing to go there. We imagined we could go and buy clothes...once we arrived we said we were looking for employment, they wrote our names and we started. They gave us a pick and shovel; we worked 30 days and at the end got 9 shillings. The ones who stayed at home were afraid to go footing for 2 weeks”.¹¹²

Map of Northern Malawi showing Native Authority boundaries as defined by the Native Authority Ordinance, 1933



Map 6.

Adapted from Vail, H. L., 'Suggestions towards a reinterpreted Tumbuka history' in B. Pachai (ed.) *The Early History of Malawi* (London, 1972)

Quietly, Hewe became a place of significance for thousands of migrating labourers who were going to Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia in search of work. Migrant-related infrastructures developed alongside other momentous processes of material change such as the clearing of the road through the Valley and the proliferation of trading facilities in the region. The ways in which people organised themselves for labour,¹¹³ the arrangements of how they ate and slept, and the order by which people respected others; all of these social and economic fibres began transforming.¹¹⁴ Understanding the impact of labour migration upon rural communities, as well as upon individuals as they travel away from their homes in search of work, has been a major pursuit of historians and anthropologists working on colonial East and Southern Africa from the time of the detailed ethnographic Rhodes-Livingstone investigations onwards.¹¹⁵ What is less often established is how the actual physical by-products of these processes, be they roads, labour recruitment centres, maize mills, or tea houses, impacted upon the production of local authority and how they shaped the landscape of chieftaincy in not immediately obvious ways.

As Hewe became redefined further by certain other emerging infrastructure, besides the Mission, the Katumbi chiefs were given new opportunities to regain prestige. The focus of inquiry so far has been on the production of formal authority throughout different periods. If these new sites of modernity within Hewe are taken as a context in which this authority is to be produced then it is possible to note how it offered both opportunities and challenges to the Katumbi leadership. Such understandings of the production of chiefly power are not adequately captured when Hewe's politics are understood through the colonial archive alone. Indeed even by looking through the memoirs and memories of colonial officers who worked closely with such communities at the time that these profound changes were taking place, the negotiations of chiefly power in this emerging landscape are not obvious. Setting these material consequences of the colonial economy within the framework not of the State but local perspectives of the place and the power within it can help in understanding how formal authority is captured and recreated.

Dukamayere: consolidating official power and capturing local authority 1932-1939

The figure of Dukamayere Katumbi was able to gain much greater authority than his immediate predecessors on account of his close connection to the Livingstonia Mission; this has already been discussed. His approval as a Native Authority was a combination of the long campaign for recognition which the Katumbi Royal family had been fighting since the DANO of 1912 and the implementation of the Native Administration Ordinance (NAO) of 1933 which necessitated a closer and more local management of rural communities which he was in a position to provide. However, whilst these changes guaranteed 'official' recognition at the level of mission and colonial administration a quite different process of power accumulation was required at the local level in order for the Katumbi chieftainship to regain prowess in the eyes of the Hewe population; this thesis argues that the local legitimacy accorded to Dukamayere was given a greater chance of success on account of how the new road and the expanding trading centre in the 1930's, was able to assist him in centralizing his power base and bringing the territory of Hewe more substantially under the chieftainship of Katumbi once more.

The clearing of the road from Mzimba to Hewe which travelled on from there in to Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika coincided with these changes in framework and personnel in 1933. This, a section of the Great North Road, had a transformative effect on the communities through which it passed, expanding trade and increasing the traffic of both people and goods along its course. Charles Munthali's most vivid memory of it is that during the war from 1941-3 troops from the Kings African Rifles marching from Zomba northwards and then west into

Northern Rhodesia via the Great North Road would camp in Hewe all the way from Kaduku in the eastern part to Thanila in the west. He remembers scavenging with friends for the soldiers leftover food tins; amongst them Fray Bentos pie tins.¹¹⁶

Hewe had always been a nodal point in terms of trade and markets and it was only with the onset of colonial rule that its identity was reoriented to become a peripheral borderland in the eyes of the state. The passage that people took through the Hewe Valley had been long established as an important local route of migration and exchange. The proximity of the settlement at Hewe to its neighbours in Muyombe and Malambo - with whom it exchanged cattle, millet, maize and beans - ensured that there was a thriving local trade; movement which was guaranteed by the fact that the local political connections with these same neighbouring communities were historical and interwoven. It is likely that the road route was designed around 'popular resting places', as far as it was topographically possible to do so, with Hewe accommodating labour migrants on their ways north already it was an obvious choice to snake the road through the Valley before making a small diversion through Northern Rhodesian territory.

Whilst the road may not have initiated these movements it did a good job of making it much safer and quicker to travel the well trodden route, even if it would take several more years for bus and car transport to become a feature of the road. The road might not have passed through Hewe at all though had the North Nyasa Residents Association (NNRA) had their way. This small group of European settlers and businessmen who were based in the north protested strongly against the route of the road cutting through the Hewe Valley. They argued that it was a bad choice, both for the poor scenery and for the fact that it passed through country "infested with tsetse fly".¹¹⁷ The lack of attention paid to the NNRA demands, who wanted the route to accommodate more of the feeder roads so that they could increase the flow of products from the areas in which they had invested, indicates the government priorities in the north. European settlers in southern areas, where business interests mattered greatly to the economy and logistical concerns were given much attention, contrasted hugely. In the north stimulating the peasant economy had been of much greater import. In line with this a notable change took place in 1937 which opened the way for Hewe and its markets to grow in importance: a way was cleared through the Njakwa Gorge which saw the road extend to the lakeshore. This opened up a host of new transport and marketing possibilities, as well as to the instigation of various agricultural schemes which had been long devised but for which the prohibitively high transport costs had previously been shelved. It was from then on, remarked Jato Kawonga, when "people could move freely here and there [...] many came through these roads. That is when trade first started at Chiteshe, selling maize and other things".¹¹⁸

Chiteshe, at the crossroads in Hewe: A new place of power

'Chiteshe' refers to the area in Hewe which became a thriving trading centre during the 1930s and 40s; its name coming from the Tumbuka/English word, *siteshoni*, or station. This flourishing area soon became recognised as the heart of Hewe. From the early 1940s once a Witwatersrand Native Labour Association recruitment base was established here, and from which time the name Chiteshe came in to existence, local canteens opened, people began converting parts of their homes into local rest houses, local women found jobs there cooking for the migrants and portering luggage of returning migrants,¹¹⁹ a maize mill was built by the Boma, and WNLA representatives moved to live nearby. The area grew and extended to new parts of surrounding settlements which became known as 'Shasha', from the Chitumbuka word 'kusaska' meaning to

offer for sale or to hawk about. The area from Chiteshe to Shasha is remembered today as having been one big trading centre.¹²⁰ The Great North Road ran right through the middle of it.

In addition to the trade and business which this new space encouraged, the impact of the social development that took place here cannot be overstated. Communicating to the DC of North Nyasa the DC of Mbeya in southern Tanganyika asked for help making estimates for as many rest camps as he considered necessary in this district to provide shelter for the labourers who were walking to Tanganyika for work. He stated that they should be brick structures with floors of cement, cement plastered walls and a corrugated iron roof. Additionally there was a budget for a caretaker at each camp and a hospital assistant.¹²¹ It was made very clear by the PC that the siting of the shelters should follow popular resting places and not be altered to simply bring them within their own territory:

"If it is considered advisable to provide for these emigrants, four rest camps must be built...The provision of medical facilities would be a boon to the travelers and dispensaries might well be established near the Chitipa camp...and at Katumbi, where NA Katumbi has been asking incessantly for medical facilities".¹²²

The economic and social development of the area then is clear to see, but observing the emergence of Chiteshe is also instructive when analysing the political history of Hewe, showing how a certain combination of infrastructures were able to produce a powerful new type of settlement; one which became the central point for the whole of the Hewe Valley for the first time in its history at this moment. The new road (1933), the Native Authority headquarters (1934), which was the first building to be constructed by the government for Katumbi and the first brick building with an iron sheet roof to appear in Hewe, and the WNLA recruitment base (1937) together produced a place which easily surmounted the challenge which Mwachibanda had posed and even rivaled neighbouring settlements for the goods and services that began to be offered there. Whilst Dukamayere had gained a reputation as a strong chief from early on, he had taken the throne when the Royal family's power was dispersed and weak. The economic and geographical power base which the place of Chiteshe became enabled Dukamayere to consolidate his local power and centralize his chieftaincy which had been lacking a territorial focal point up until that point. This was the opportunity that was needed to re-establish the Katumbi family, centralize its power and make public its position.

With its "literate instruments of administration, classification, communication and enforcement"¹²³ and its insistence upon demarcating "political place" with borders, maps and surveys, it has already been noted how the colonial tools of territoriality had a powerful effect on local politics. At no time before had there existed such a need for those in positions of traditional authority to demonstrate a strong connection to a particular space as proof of their legitimacy; territorial behaviour was "an aspect of the group, but not the basis of the grouping. Pre-colonial clans and lineages were social groups within territorial dimensions but were not territorial entities in themselves".¹²⁴ In the pre-colonial period royal family clans occupied a number of different spaces within the Hewe Valley and, as has been shown, they had always needed to be relatively mobile so as to respond quickly to the threats of raiding and opportunities of trade. This ensured the ease in which the chieftaincy, and its royal narratives, survived as it ventured into new spaces. The Native Administrative Ordinance bound space and authority together very specifically. The new colonial order released the population from the threat of violent conflict however it also inflicted upon the chiefly families restraints on their usual patterns of accumulation and authority. Such chieftaincies had to sedentarise and

centralise in order to continue as a recognised institution by the government, and it had to absorb itself into the new patterns of wealth accumulation to ensure that new economic and political rivals from within the community itself were not able to usurp formal authority from it.

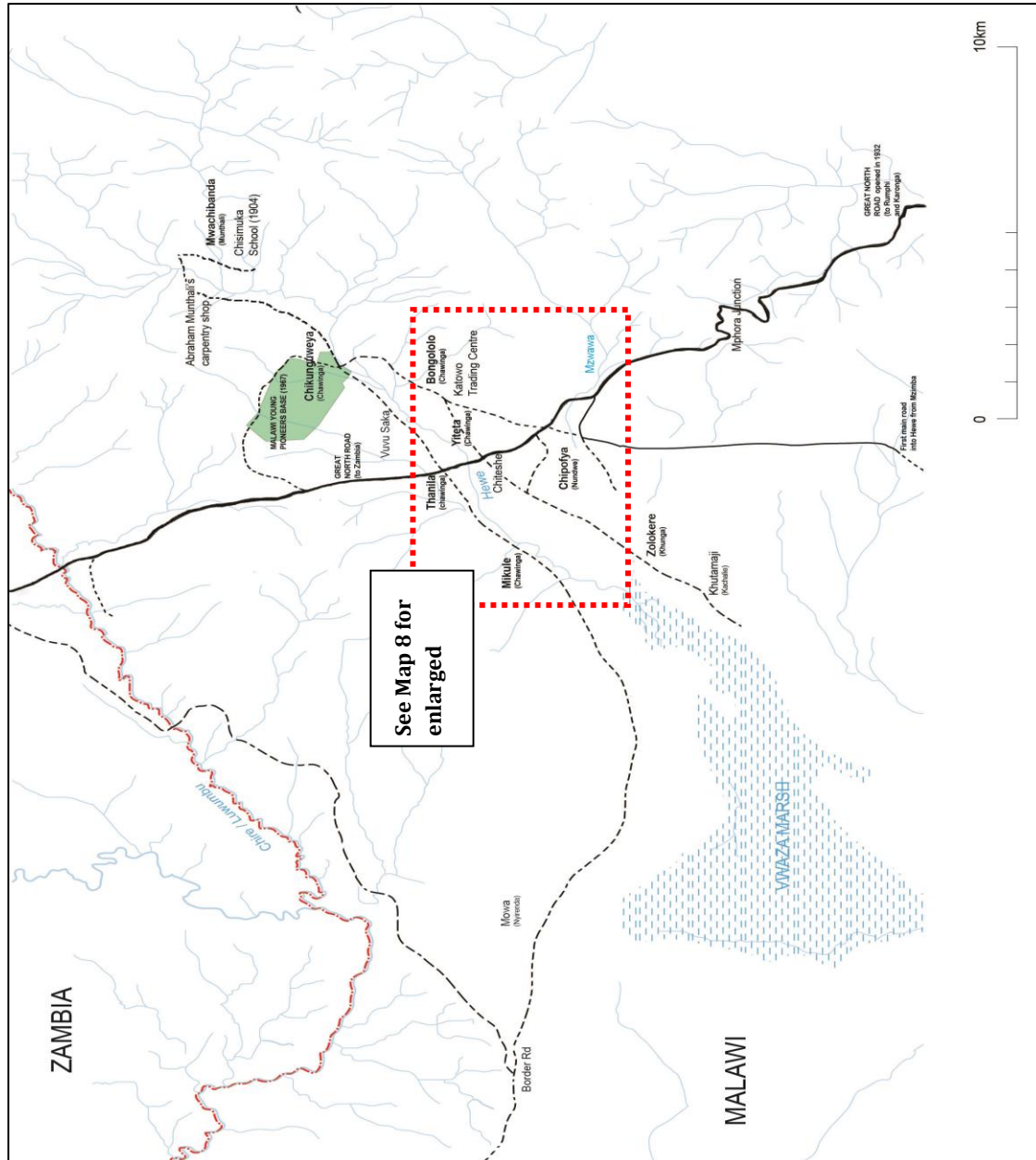
New territorial dimensions: Chiteshe redefining chieftaincy

The first chief's office was built by the Government and still stands, 70 years old, at the road junction in Chiteshe. It was the first time that a Themba Katumbi had relocated from his clans' residence to a public place.¹²⁵ It was a visibility which was further extended when Native Courts were established in 1934. This not only increased the power native authorities could wield over their people, as disputes were increasingly dealt with by chiefs courts rather than headmen and severe penalties could be doled out by them as a result, but it also gave them a new public platform on which to perform. Prior to this time the most important places of the chieftaincy had been the ritual spaces of the clans' burial grounds and at Vuvu stream where Mulindafwa's spirit had been buried. This shift from the private to the public is important when considering how Timothy Chawinga was later able to establish himself amongst the people. By the time that he became Themba in 1942 the school, the market and the main trading stores Mandala and Kandodo had already shifted from Chisimuka to Chiteshe. It made sense for business that all the amenities were brought together in one central area; but whether it was on account of the increased administration authority of Katumbi that these changes took place or simply as a result of economic pull of this new centre is unclear. What is clear is that a major ambition of Dukamayere, the reduction in the power and influence of headman Mwachibanda, was fulfilled in the process.¹²⁶

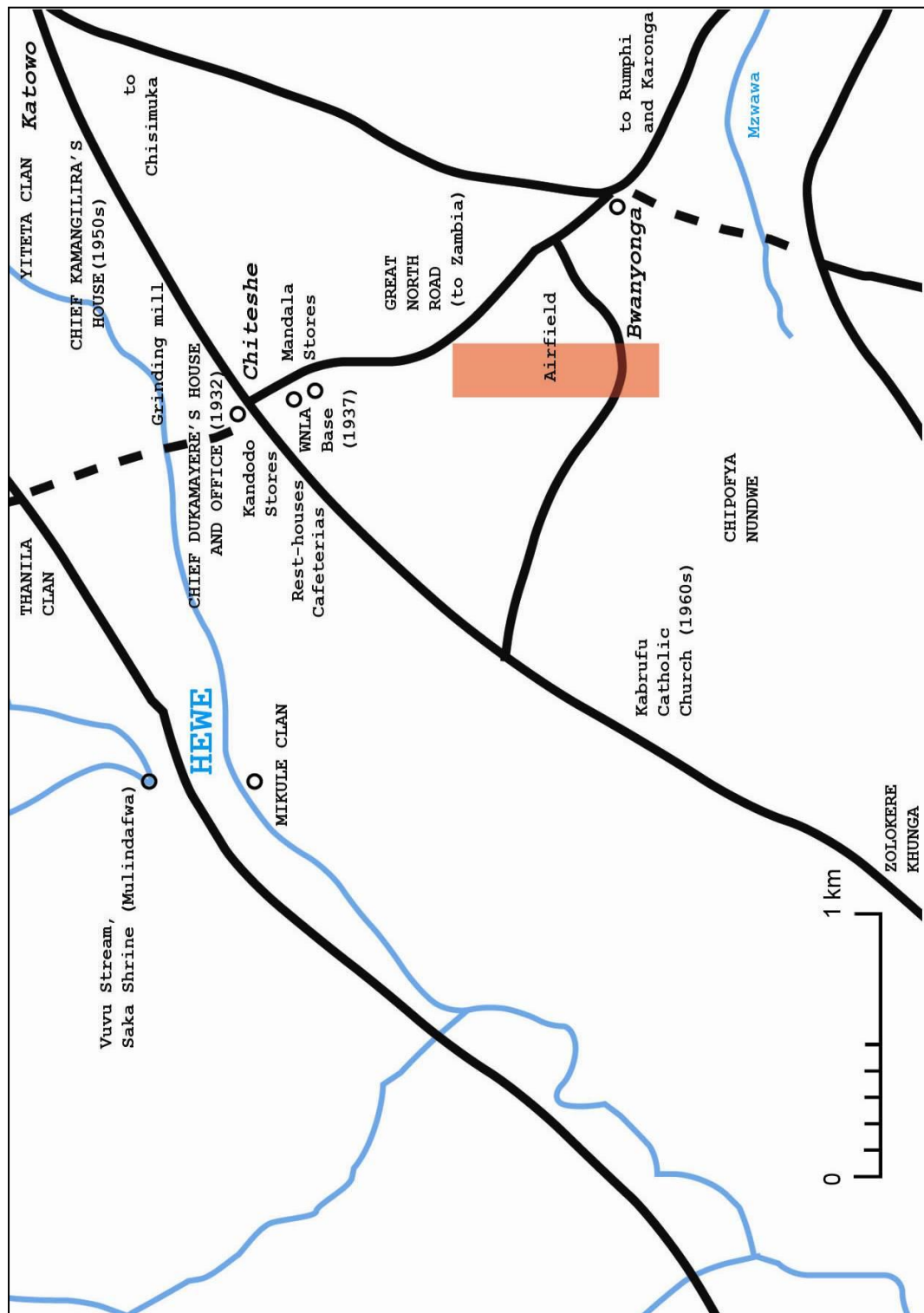
The movement of the school was a key factor in this shifting political geography. Dukamayere, himself a Livingstonia educated man, knew the importance of providing access to education in a place if it was to be considered "progressive". Once the school had moved from Chisimuka he called upon John Mwangonde, another person with whom he had had contact at with at Livingstonia, who accepted Dukamayere's offer to come and become the first qualified African teacher to teach in Hewe. Mwangonde provided the people of Hewe with a high level of education but also crucially proved an invaluable friend and ally to Timothy Chawinga when he became chief. His role in the chieftaincy of Timothy will be explored later, but it is mentioned here in order to stress how significant the period of Dukamayere's reign had been.

Dukamayere I did not only bring this well respected teacher to Chiteshe. He gathered people from all over Hewe with skills that would be usefully employed there. Jim Ngwira was one of the few people in the northern region who knew how to fix bicycles in the early 1930s. He had been living and working out of Chisimuka but was asked by Dukamayere to relocate to Chiteshe where he was given workshop premises and a key for a place to keep his tools.¹²⁷ Abraham Munthali, a skilled carpenter newly trained at Livingstonia, was also coaxed to work in Chiteshe.¹²⁸ All of these changes saw to it that business, population, and tax revenue all increased, and Dukamayere's reputation and power grew. The impact which the infrastructures around which Chiteshe was built changed peoples day to day lives. This might have been due to the new opportunities for wealth, as Charles Munthali, NyaKhunga and Nyamfune have mentioned.¹²⁹ It might also have been on account of their access to the dispensary and school. Whatever these changes were attributable to did not matter so much as the fact the general shifts in conditions amongst the people reflected well upon Dukamayere and he was able to consolidate his authority as a result.

Map 7. Native Authority Katumbi, showing the main roads and clan authority headquarters, see map 8 for large scale map of the colonial trading centre



Map 8. Chiteshe, the colonial trading centre in Hewe, and surrounding area



There is a growing presence of Katumbi's voice in the archive around local matters, furthermore the Bledisloe Commission Report records Dukamayere as fighting for his territory in Northern Rhodesia, and appears to semi-acknowledge his right to it.

Mwachibanda maintained advantages over the Katumbi's in some respects as the market and the amazing fertility of his land was still able to empower him. Government Ulendo notes recorded as late as the 1950s highlighted the area as a place of incredible fertility; "[It is] remarkable", wrote the Agricultural Officer for Northern Province in 1950, "that there is a surplus for sale from so small an area".¹³⁰ The increased value which had been placed on agricultural commodities, especially at a time when famine was taking its toll on the Nyasaland population across the country, put Mwachibanda in a particularly strong position. It had even been slated as one of the places where Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) maize could have been grown to be supplied to the workers on the experimental plantations near Mzuzu, and whilst these plans came to nothing Mwachibanda and Chisimuka remained economically crucial places for Hewe. Since it was an area that still might have chosen to establish independent economic ties outside of the Native Authority jurisdiction, it was also an area with which the Katumbi chiefs had to cultivate especially strong links. As the local political economy became oriented toward agricultural production the Katumbi chieftainship had to rethink its relationship to the agrarian spaces of the Hewe Valley if it was going to keep control over its rapidly altering landscape.

Headman Mwachibanda grew to become a 'Big Man' over the first decade of the century, but there was a limit to his authority, especially when certain external forces which had shaped the political space he operated in shifted. He had neither the time-span nor likely the ambition to convert this economic prestige into something more formal as the *Balowoka* big men had done one hundred years beforehand. The context of colonialism, which reoriented legitimacy around a broader "tribal" identity, looked to more established narratives of legitimacy to form the shape of native politics, even if they had to be dusted off a little. In Hewe these were much more easily found in the clan histories of the Katumbi royal family, the Chawingas. Mwachibanda was a well-known man but he had limited and very parochial historical raw materials to work with and was not, therefore, in a strong position to claim a role as an "indirect rule chief". On account of this he, and other "big men" like him, began to lose their advantage.

Conclusions

This was a time of great change in Nyasaland, but change that was broadcast differentially; a product of the different histories of north and south. Whilst in the south the fault-lines which had developed in the context of the early European exploitation were beginning to cause problems amongst the population, in the north there seemed more room for African advancement through the Livingstonia Mission which was helping to shape political space and personal ambition.

Timothy Chawinga inherited a geographically centralised chieftaincy. The area of Chiteshe gave the chief new opportunities to politically control an area and direct resources and people through it. However this area also created an environment in which other non-chiefly characters could thrive. Whilst access to mission education and support had strengthened the Katumbi claims to recognition with the government and had enabled Dukamayere to assume the leadership in Hewe it also enabled local artisans and Livingstonia trained teachers and pastors to carve for themselves an important place amongst the people of Hewe. The moral

authority which had previously lain only within chiefly institutions became dispersed and the increasing economic power that these non-chiefly characters wielded began to pressurize the various roles of the Katumbi chieftainship. The concentration of services and skilled people within the Chiteshe area enabled Hewe's economy to grow but by the late 1940s where once the chiefs had been the only people identified as prestigious there were now many growing numbers of people who challenged this order.

Within the chiefly clans tensions were also mounting. The impact of mission education was blamed for confusing the succession process by bringing new royal clans – from families that had been influenced by Christianity and education - into the line for Themba Katumbi. The new opportunities for power and wealth which clans in the position of native authority would now benefit from created jealousies within the Chawinga family. Vwende, the immediate successor to Dukamayere who took the throne in 1939 died within six months of his appointment under somewhat suspicious circumstances thought to have stemmed from these internal conflicts. It took another two years to find an appropriate successor who agreed to be crowned in this atmosphere of dangerous competition.

¹ Quotation from Chief Katumbi, MNA, NNM 1/14/8: *Native Administration: Miscellaneous 1940-49*, Minutes of a meeting held at Mwazisi to discuss the proposal to federate the administrations of Native Authorities Chikulamaembe and Katumbi, 25th June 1941

² J. McCracken, *A History of Malawi 1859-1966*, (Woodbridge and Rochester, 2012) 84-85

³ Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order* cited in Berry, 'Debating', 644

⁴ Berry, 'Debating', 644

⁵ Gray, *Colonial Rule*, 102

⁶ Interview MD with sub-Chief Zolokere Khunga, Chatumbwa Village, 4 February 2009; MD with Khutamaji Kachalie, Khutamaji Village, 5 February 2009

⁷ Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 1

⁸ Gray, *Colonial Rule*, 104

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 1

¹¹ Gray, *Colonial Rule*, 111

¹² When discussing the evolution of Tumbuka names, Chondoka and Bota highlight the difficulty of tracing all the original clan names since they have changed so drastically with the passage of time. Furthermore, other names also "broke-off from the main original name for one reason or the other". (Chondoka and Bota, *A History*, xii)

¹³ G.C. Mazarire, 'Oral traditions as heritage: the historiography of oral historical research on the Shona communities of Zimbabwe', *Historia*, 47:2 (2002), 431

¹⁴ Mazarire, 'Oral traditions', 431

¹⁵ Gray, *Colonial Rule*, 104

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123

¹⁷ MNA, S1/922/26: Northern Province, *Chiefs and Headmen appointments, 1926-1939*

¹⁸ MNA, S1/499/20: *District Monthly Report, North Nyasa 1920-21*. Africans were said to be "resorting" to primitive practices in law and medicine rather than travelling to Karonga in order to access that which the government was offering.

¹⁹ Officers working in the Northern Province, at least up until the 1950s were generally left "to get on with it"; this was a feeling described in the memoirs of retired officers, certain of whose letters and memories were recorded by the Oxford Colonial Records Project and are deposited in the Rhodes House archive at Oxford University. The reminiscences of Richard Kettlewell, for example, of when he was working as an agricultural officer in the northern part of Nyasaland during the late 1930s, give the impression of the very great sense of distance which he felt existed between himself and his superiors: "I saw next to nothing of them", he remembers, and goes on to mention that the Director of Agriculture Small and his deputy Hornby, being specialists, "had no experience of field advisory work and, I think, little interest in it: they never travelled with me, seldom called at my base and correspondence was minimal. (Oxford University Rhodes House, Oxford Colonial Records Project (OCR), MSS. Afr. s. 1715 (154) (Box 10), 27ff, Papers of Major Richard W. Kettlewell, CMG)

²⁰ Richard Kettlewell describes his first year of experience during which time he recalls that “I must have walked between two and three thousand miles, most of them only in the company of Africans from whom I learned the language and a basic understanding of their way of life and the problems of improving it. Of equal importance I acquired an eye for the countryside, its potential and its constraints, which stood me in good stead when I had wider responsibilities for it”. (OCR), Kettlewell, f.17

²¹ A point made by both Kettlewell, who eventually became Director of Agriculture, and Cosmo Haskard (District Commissioner and Provincial Commissioner) when they were asked to reflect upon their time in the colonial service.

²² See also Fields, *Revival and Rebellion*, 56. She discusses how District Notebooks were an important point of continuity; they contained a lot of information about local events, languages, traditions, and personalities which were “passed by official to successor”. This was crucial especially with regard to the government’s continued co-operation with the “men who counted locally”.

²³ MNA, S1/478/29: *Provincial Annual Report, Northern Province, 1928-30*

²⁴ The Lands Commission (1928-1931), and in particular the North Nyasa Native Reserves Commission (1929), were set up to collect information about local populations, their land practices and their political organisation just before indirect rule. For more on this see MNA: S1/1519A/28 and Public Records Office, London (hereafter PRO): CO 525/130/3. General discussions around boundaries between the period 1934 to 1961 can be found in MNA: NN 1/5/2, *Boundaries 1934-61* and PRO: CO 525/149/9, *Alteration of District Boundaries*. The debates sparked off by the Bledisloe Commission played an important role in the reshaping of Hewe especially with regard to the potential incorporation of Katumbi’s people in Northern Rhodesia. See MNA: NNM 1/14/8. Discussions from the Northern Rhodesian administration’s point of view can be noted in Zambia National Archives (hereafter ZNA): EP 4/7/1, *Native chiefs and headmen 1934-39*

²⁵ It was called the British Central Africa Protectorate in 1893 and only later, in 1907, became the Nyasaland Protectorate.

²⁶ A levy of 6 shillings was charged in the first instance which was most often paid with combinations of grain and labour. Whilst the Foreign Office was not very happy with this form of payment the company itself didn’t mind as it was in need of labour.

²⁷ Interview LV with Timothy Chawinga

²⁸ Interview MD with Abraham Munthali, Kawulumira Village, 30 January 2009

²⁹ Interview MD with Austin Mfune (Principal Group Village Headman Chembe), Chembe Village, 29 January 2009

³⁰ Informal discussion MD with Joseph Munthali, February 2009

³¹ Interview MD with Elias Jato Kawonga, Nguwoyang’ombe Village, 29 January 2009

³² Gray, *Colonial Rule*, 101

³³ Interview MD with Ching’anya Nyirenda, Ching’anya Village, 22nd January 2009

³⁴ Interview MD with Kawonga, 29th January 2009

³⁵ The trade stores and primary school would certainly have been a focal point for people in Malambo, which is presently found in Zambia, where a section of the Katumbi family settled some ten to twenty years beforehand.

³⁶ See table in appendix II.

³⁷ MNA, S1/478/29, 1928 Annual Report

³⁸ See Chiremba, *Chieftainship*, 68, for a discussion as to how Chilongozi was chosen as Themba Chikulamayembe.

³⁹ Vail and White, ‘Tribalism’, 155

⁴⁰ MNA, S1/499/20. Transport infrastructure was almost non-existent and there were limited job opportunities for Africans in the north. Dr Laws, the principal at Livingstonia Mission, had predicted that there would be a significant migration out of the province, especially if the hut tax remained at 6/-.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Report from October 1920

⁴² MNA, S1/1172/19: *District Monthly Reports, North Nyasa District 1919-20*, John Abraham, Acting Resident, 31 March 1920

⁴³ *Ibid.*; see also PRO: CO 626/1: *General Administration Reports 1907-1913*, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, 31 March 1913

⁴⁴ MNA, S1/1434/22: *Provincial Annual Report, Northern Province, 1921-22*; MNA, S1/1434/23: *Provincial Annual Report, Northern Province, 1922-23*. The Spanish influenza pandemic of 1919, outbreak of Bubonic Plague in 1920, and a severe famine in 1923 all had obvious deleterious effects upon the region. This built on top of other disastrous ecological events such as the spread of bovine pleuro-pneumonia in 1912 which had effectively ended the trade in cattle (Vail and White, ‘Tribalism’, 158).

⁴⁵ Vail and White, 'Tribalism', 158

⁴⁶ See M. Page, 'Malawians and the Great War: Oral History in Reconstructing Africa's Recent Past' *Oral History Review*, 18:1 (1980), 49-61. Page suggests that on account of its position on the border with German East Africa, Nyasaland played an important role in the East African Campaign. 200,000 Africans were recruited as soldiers and labourers in the military and the rest of the population was charged with providing food for the army throughout the duration of the campaign.

⁴⁷ Vail and White, 'Tribalism', 158

⁴⁸ See M. Page, 'The war of Thangata: Nyasaland and the east Africa campaign, 1914-1918, *Journal of African History*, 19:1 (1978), 87-100. Discussing this time and its impact upon their lives, Page describes how Malawians gave the war a name which reflected the intensity of their feelings, "The war of Thangata". "The demand for African labour, known as *thangata*, had become one of the chief characteristics of British rule in the Nyasaland Protectorate. In Chichewa the word literally means 'help' and originally referred to a system of 'narrowly structured exchanges of services between chiefs and their dependents prior to British colonization.' In the colonial situation, however, the term was applied to the demands, usually from new European landlords, for labour in exchange for 'rent' and for taxes. *Thangata* thus reflected a sense of new dependency and gradually came to signify not 'help' but unwarranted demands by Europeans for African service. '*Thangata*,' explained one Malawian, is 'work which was done without real benefit.' In this context the word symbolized the worst features of British rule".

⁴⁹ Tax revenue noticeably increased at this time which coincided with a more accurate census, enabling the Resident to "prosecute more vigorously". See MNA, S1/1172/19: *District Monthly Reports, North Nyasa District, 1919-20*

⁵⁰ MNA, S1/478/29, 1930 Annual Report

⁵¹ MNA, S1/499/20, Report from October 1920

⁵² The uneven impact of ecological change across the region should be considered in greater detail, especially how these dramatic changes in economy and society during the first two decades of the century differently affected the patterns of local authority. The ways in which this environmental context assisted and/or hindered the development of chiefly authority in the colonial setting is the subject of chapters three, four and five.

⁵³ M. Page, 'The war', 88

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "The thin white line: the size of the British colonial service in Africa", *African Affairs*, 70:314 (1980), 25-44

⁵⁶ According to Kirk-Greene the years 1919 to 1939 were the high point of British Empire in Africa. These years were, however, characterised by five year cycles of expansion and contraction, which is reflected in the patterns of recruitment and retrenchment of administrators. There was a post-war boom, a slump between 1921-1923 followed by expansion until the late 1920s, but then the world recession of the early 1930s saw 75% retrenchment in 1931. A recovery did take place which reached a peak in 1938 until the Second World War put pay to the recruitment of any more officers. By 1946 the recruitment picks up again, with a record number of 553 appointments to colonial service (Kirk-Greene, 'The Thin White', 26). The effect of these specific periods of expansion and contraction on the ground has not really been considered at length.

⁵⁷ Vail and White, 'Tribalism', 152

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 155-156

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 152

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 159

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 155-156

⁶² McCracken, *Politics*, 335

⁶³ Power, *Political Culture*, 20

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 21

⁶⁵ MNA, NN 1/20/1, Memorandum from J. O'Brien, D.C Mzimba to P.C. Northern Province, 23 April 1931, cited in Chiremba, *Chieftainship*, 81

⁶⁶ Interview MD with Kawonga, 29th January 2009; Interview MD with Chembe, 29 January 2009; Informal discussion with Martin Bongololo Chawinga at Katowo Trading Centre in September 2009.

⁶⁷ "The conflicts with Chikulamayembe only really came with the borders" (Interview MD with Kawonga, 29th January 2009)

⁶⁸ The absence of the once historically important net making skills in Chikulamayembe's country was alluded to in a meeting held in Bolero (Chikulamayembe's headquarters) on the 15 May 1941. When the issue of using nets to catch pests came up Regent Juwaunini pointed out that nets had never been used in

this area as “people did not know how to make them” (MNA, NNM 1/14/8, *Minutes of a meeting held at Mwazisi to discuss the proposal to federate the administrations of Native Authorities Chikulamaembe and Katumbi*, 25th June 1941). This gives weight to this story told in Katumbi’s area about the provision of ropes to Chikulamayembe.

⁶⁹ In 1941, discussions to federate the treasuries of Chikulamayembe and Katumbi were stalled on account of this unresolved dispute, as well as in relation to the contested “ownership” of the village of Chelanya. At the meeting Headman Chipofya testified to the fact that “one time Chikulamaembe sent word to Katumbi to ask for ropes. Katumbi sent Chelanya with the ropes. Chelanya received presents from Chikulamaembe and since that time he has been under him. That is all I know”. (MNA, NNM 1/14/8).

⁷⁰ Interview MD with Group Village Headman Patstone Yiteta Chawinga and Laugh Wazumale Chawinga, 17 September, 2009

⁷¹ Interview MD with Gideon Luhanga, Mwatanantha Village, 30 January 2009. “Whites came first with him. They taught him to use a gun and I saw him shooting. I was still young by then. We were wondering these are things they use when killing people. I hardly saw any whites at that time. I only saw one and he was using machila”.

⁷² Chiremba, *Chieftainship*, 80

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ MNA, NN 1/20/7, *African Provincial Council Meeting Minutes*, Memo O’Brien to PC north, 4 October 1930 cited in Chiremba, *Chieftainship*, 80

⁷⁵ Throughout Timothy’s reign (1942-73) these tensions can be seen borne out in discussions about shared borders, treasuries and courts. What colonial officers describe as “petty jealousies”, which they consider to serve only to deter development in their areas, are meaningful contestations that have resonance in local imaginations of chiefly power. As regards the tension between Katumbi and Mwachibanda, there was clearly some desire on the part of Timothy Chawinga to assert authority over the headman as he denies that a school had ever been based in Mwachibanda village, certainly not the first school in the area which he describes was built in Katowo. (Interview LV with Timothy Chawinga)

⁷⁶ MNA, S1/1171/19: *Monthly District Report, North Nyasa District*, 1919-20

⁷⁷ MNA, S1/499/20, *District Reports North Nyasa, 1920-21*, Principal Headmen and councillors across the district met at Karonga in May, December and March to discuss hut tax, the Lands Commission, the census and new proposals with regard to vaccination and treatment of leprosy.

⁷⁸ MNA, S1/478/29, *North Nyasa District, Annual Report 1929*

⁷⁹ PRO, CO 626/3: *Nyasaland Administration Reports 1914-1919*

⁸⁰ MNA, S1/478/29, *Annual Report 1929*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* John O’Brien, D.C North Nyasa to Anderson, Provincial Commissioner Northern Province, Annual Report 1929. This was a sentiment that had already gained popularity in other parts of the British Empire on account of Lugard’s publication, *The Dual Mandate*. The implications of this have been discussed at length in the introduction to this thesis.

⁸⁶ “Mr Burden, His Honour thought, had obtained a wrong impression of the position of Katumbi which might be corrected by a perusal of the evidence given before the North Nyasa Commission. This Mr. Burden had not seen and I have therefore arranged to send it to him” (S1/922/26: Northern Province – Chiefs and Headmen Appointments 1926-39: folio 60. H.H The Judge in Northern Province, Re: the Chikulamayembe Succession)

⁸⁷ MNA, NN 4/1/1: *Northern Province Annual Report 1930*

⁸⁸ As the previous chapter has noted the revised 1932 edition of *Notes on the History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga Peoples*, by Thomas Cullen Young attributed to Katumbi a more senior position amongst the Balowoka to before.

⁸⁹ Vail and White, ‘Tribalism’, 159

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Chiremba, *Chieftaincy*, 81.

⁹² MNA: NNM 1/7/2 Report on Tribal Organisation of Henga-Nkamanga NA, 29 Oct 1933. This all took place following the meeting at Ng’onga which had been called to define the tribal organisation of the Wahenga people (See MNA: NNM 3/1/2, Mzimba District Annual Report 1934; MNA: NNM 1/14/8)

⁹³ Several discussions with Martin Chibumila Chawinga, in various locations but most often at the Katowo Trading Centre, October 2008 to September 2009

⁹⁴ Interview MD with Robert Bongololo Chawinga, Bongololo Village, 10th September 2009

⁹⁵ MNA, NN 4/1/1, *Northern Province Annual Report*, 1930, G. B. Anderson, P.C Northern Province

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ MNA, S15/1/3/1, *Hewe Improved Council*, 1943, DC Mzimba, H. C. Foulger to P.C Northern Province Barker, 24th May 1943

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, W.M.C Galbraith, Principal, Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia Mission to H.C Foulger, D.C Mzimba, 20th May 1943

⁹⁹ MNA, S1/922/26, *Chiefs and Headmen Appointments, 1926-1939*, "Memorandum on the discussion on points raised by the Rev. E. Manda in correspondence with the Themba Chikulamaembe", attachment to a letter from O'Brien, D.C. Mzimba to P.C. Northern Province, 27th April, 1935

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ In fact this issue of Mwafulirwa had wider implications. At a later meeting in 1941 regarding a possible change to district boundaries, DC Karonga (Adagh) in correspondence with DC Mzimba Foulger wrote that he thought they should think very carefully about changing anything as a calm had been attained. If things were changed to benefit Mzimba, he pondered, then it would certainly be construed by Afulirwa and Ankonde and Kyungu as a "first step to absorption under the Ahenga". His worry was that such modifications would ignite a bigger dispute between Ankonde and Ahenga. His conclusion being that "the declaring of Mwafulirwa's country as independent of both (it is in fact now a buffer state) will tend to help the healing of old wounds and remove one of the sources of jealousy" (MNA: NNM 1/14/8 O. C. Adagh (DC Karonga) to Foulger (DC Mzimba), 9th April 1941)

¹⁰⁴ MNA, S1/922/26. In the discussion about the northern boundary of Mzimba District between Mwafulirwa and Chikulamaembe, the D.C. was asked by Murray, the Provincial Commissioner Northern Province, to clear up another matter concerning an earlier promise to start a new Henga Boma. The P.C wished it to be noted that there was "no more justification in giving Chikulamayembe a boma of his own that any other chief of similar size, say Yakobi Jere at Emfeni". It would of course have been easier to administer Yakobi Jere at Emfeni as his chieftaincy was politically organised and associated with the larger M'mbelwa Paramountcy, whilst Hewe and Nkamanga were quite definitely politically separate and 'a law unto themselves'.

¹⁰⁵ MNA, S1/922/26, "Memorandum on the discussion on points raised by the Rev. E. Manda in correspondence with the Themba Chikulamaembe", attachment to a letter from O'Brien, D.C. Mzimba to P.C. Northern Province, 27th April, 1935

¹⁰⁶ MNA: NNM 1/14/8, Edward Manda to Themba Chikulamayembe, 28 March 1941

¹⁰⁷ MNA, S1/478/29, *North Nyasa District Report*, Annual Report 1929, Native Administration, Anderson to Chief Secretary, 20 February 1930

¹⁰⁸ MNA: NNM 1/2/2: *Northern Rhodesia Boundaries, 1931-1936*, J. O'Brien, D.C. Mzimba to P.C. Northern Province, 24th July 1934

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Memorandum of a discussion between the D.C. Mzimba and D.C. Lundazi regarding the inter-protectorate boundary, 1st October 1934

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, C.H. Rawstorne, D.C. Lundazi to J. O'Brien, D.C. Mzimba, 11th October 1934

¹¹² Interview MD with Gideon Luhanga

¹¹³ A useful ethnographic description of this can be found in R. E. Gregson, 'Work, Exchange and Leadership: The Mobilization of Agricultural Labor Among the Tumbuka of the Henga Valley', Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1969. His field site is fifty miles or so from Hewe and displays similar characteristics.

¹¹⁴ The most interesting differences in this regard were the changes that took place to the institutions of *mphara* and *ntanganene*. These were the institutions which organised the male and female initiations and formed the social basis of community life. Men and boys ate together in *mphara*, and boys also slept together in communal houses, women and girls did likewise in *ntanganene*. These arrangements began to change as the cash economy saw certain community members able to buy better food or as they desired to build themselves better houses in which they wanted their children to sleep. See, Interview MD with Mr Chilambo, Senior Group Village Headman Mteweta, 20 January 2009

¹¹⁵ A. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: an economic study of the Bemba tribe*, (Oxford, 1939); W. Watson, *Tribal cohesion in a money economy: a study of the Mambwe people of Zambia*, (Manchester, 1958); J. Van Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship*, (Manchester, 1964); and the later rethinking of the Rhodes Livingstone ethnographies by, amongst others, J. Pottier, *Migrants No More: settlement and*

survival in Mambwe villages, Zambia (Manchester, 1988); H. L. Moore and M. Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: gender, nutrition, and agricultural change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890-1990* (London, 1994); J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1999). Eugenia Herbert makes an important point where she suggests that the most serious effect of labour migration can be better gauged by imagining what *failed* to take place in the rural setting as a result of the absence of men and women who migrated. Those who spent time “outside” were often more likely to have been energetic and educated; she poses the question what might have taken place in terms of development and change had they stayed “at home” (E. Herbert, *Twilight on the Zambezi: Late Colonialism in Central Africa* (Basingstoke and New York, 2002), 73)

¹¹⁶ Interview MD with Charles Munthali, Blantyre, 6 August 2009.

¹¹⁷ MNA, S1/830/31, *Northern Nyasa Residents Association, 1931-36*, A. McKenzie (NNRA, P.O. Livingstonia) to Chief Secretary, Zomba, 5 May 1933. In all likelihood the real motivation for suggesting an alternative route was to protect and develop their own business interests in the region.

¹¹⁸ Interview MD with Kawonga, 29 January 2009; see also interview with Lyton Karua.

¹¹⁹ Interview MD with Charles Munthali. He remembers how Vinolia soap was used as payment for the porters who would carry luggage of returning migrants from the WNLA base to their homes, often several hours walk away.

¹²⁰ Interview MD with Karua

¹²¹ MNA, NNM 1/9/3, *Lupa Gold Diggings 1936-37*, quoting the DC Mbeya, DC North Nyasa to Chief Secretary Zomba, 29 October 1936

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Gray, *Colonial Rule*, 43

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 83

¹²⁵ Interview MD with NyaHarawa, Zingatikome Village, 13 February 2009

¹²⁶ Informal discussion MD with Mlomboji Munthali at his home in Mwachibanda, May 2009

¹²⁷ Interview MD with Jim Ngwira, Thiti Farm, Mwatanantha 19 September 2009

¹²⁸ Interview MD with Abraham Munthali and Nyamhango, Kawulumira Village, 22 September 2009

¹²⁹ Interview MD with Nyakhunga and Nyazunda, Chiteshe, 25 August 2009. Interview MD with Lyton Karua

¹³⁰ MNA, Transmittal files, 3-12-4F (box 9564), *Ulendo Books 1950-66*, G. Craske, Ulendo notes, August 1950

