

⁵⁰ On Kapembwa and Chisumphi possession, see the respective papers in this volume; on Chaminku possession see S. Madziyire, 'Heathen practices in the urban and rural parts of the Marandellas area and their effects upon Christianity', in Ranger and Weller, *Themes*, 76-82.

⁵¹ cf. J. Goody, *Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 65-6, who notes that Sir James Frazer has also drawn attention to the parallel between this biblical situation and that of a territorial cult among the Mossi of West Africa.

⁵² Schoffeleers, 'The interaction of the Mbona cult and Christianity', 25.

⁵³ J.P.R. Wallis (ed.), *The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone* (London, Chatto and Windus, 2 vols, 1956), (I), 87; D. and C. Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and Its Tributaries, and of the Discovery of Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858-1864* (London, J. Murray, 1865), 47.

⁵⁴ I. Schapera, *Rain-Making Rites of Tswana Tribes* (Leyden, Afrika Studiecentrum, 1971), 3.

⁵⁵ S. Madziyire, 'An Obstacle Race towards Understanding Bernard Mizeki, the Mashonaland Martyr' (Lusaka, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972). At the same conference Fr Madziyire also gave oral information on the miracles believed to have happened at Arthur Cripps's grave shrine.

⁵⁶ The Malawi Society Library, Blantyre, Papers of W.H.J. Rangeley, 1/1/3, M. Metcalfe to Rangeley, 9 Aug. 1952.

⁵⁷ R.C. Woollacott, 'Dziwaguru — God of Rain', *NADA* (1963), 40, 116-21.

⁵⁸ See below, Schoffeleers, 'The Chisumphi and Mbona Cults', 167, 184, n.96.

⁵⁹ M.L. Golola, 'Traditional Legitimacy and the Ineffectiveness of the Appeal to Primacy' (Univ. of Malawi, Dep. of History, Seminar Paper, 1973); I am indebted to Mr Golola, of the University of Kampala, for permission to quote his paper.

⁶⁰ This is a major thesis in W.M.J. Van Binsbergen, 'Religious Change in Western Zambia: Towards a Synthesis' (Lusaka, Univ. of Zambia, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972).

Explorations in the History and Sociology of Territorial Cults in Zambia¹

W.M.J. VAN BINSBERGEN

The Territorial Cult in the Zambian Context

Territorial cult and shrine cult: This is a general essay on Zambia in a volume that revolves around the application of the analytical concept of the territorial cult to Central Africa. Schoffeleers has tentatively defined this concept as

an institution of spirit veneration, proper to a land area, whose primary concern is the material and moral well-being of its population, archetypically represented by its rain-calling function, and whose immediate control is institutionally limited to an elite.²

This definition identifies what in fact has been one of the main forms of religion in Central Africa. Most of the religious institutions to be discussed in this essay comply with this definition and can conveniently be called territorial cults. However, in order to present these religious institutions, analytically and historically, in their interrelation with other institutions, I find it useful to introduce an additional analytical concept: the shrine cult.

Territorial cults as defined above are not necessarily shrine cults. The concern for the material and moral well-being of the population of a particular land area need not focus on shrines. Alternative ways in which this concern can be institutionalized are, for example, prophets who are only loosely attached, if at all, to shrines;³ other specialists who claim magical control over rain and fertility and who are professionally employed by their individual or communal clientele whenever the need arises;⁴ the concentration of power over rain, land and fertility in such movable, non-shrine-like objects as the royal bracelets of the Lunda and the Luvale.⁵ Yet, as is borne out by the studies in the present volume, the most widespread and typical form of the territorial cult in Central Africa is that of the shrine cult.

What is a shrine? a number of characteristics seem to be relevant at the same time. First a shrine is an observable object or part of the natu-

distinguishes as many as six different types of shrines: an individual's hut,¹⁰ the village shrine, villages of deceased chiefs, natural phenomena, chiefs' burial groves and relic shrines containing the chiefly paraphernalia. These may all be of relevance simultaneously, though each in a different way, to the same localized set of people. This multiplicity of shrine forms is by no means exceptional in Zambia and cannot be explained away by any particular religious or political characteristics of the Bemba. Any sources that go into some detail on the subject reveal a similar multiplicity for other Zambian peoples, although the concrete forms may be different, and deceased chiefs' villages and burial groves, for example, do not figure everywhere as shrines.

An overall distinction can be made between shrines that are man-made and shrines that are not. The latter include: trees, groves, hills, fields, pools, streams, falls and rapids. Occasionally these natural shrines may be accentuated by the erection of man-made shrines, either permanent or temporary.¹¹ A transition between natural and man-made shrines occurs when trees are purposely planted in order to provide a shrine (on graves as in many parts of Zambia, and in the case of the *muyobo* tree, which is planted in the centre of the villages of Southern Lunda, Luvale, Luchazi and related peoples),¹² or when rudimentary constructions such as a pile of stones,¹³ two uprooted ant-hills placed one against the other,¹⁴ or a branch or part of a tree trunk¹⁵ are used as shrines. The typical form of the man-made shrine, however, is a construction which, though often in miniature, is identical to the normal thatched dwelling house or to the men's shelter (a thatched construction without walls, as found in the centre of villages in many parts of Zambia). Finally, graves may be used as shrines, either with or without a hut-like construction on top of them.

Concerning the set of people involved in the cult of a certain shrine (through direct participation, or through reference and implication), the following possibilities exist:¹⁶ the cult can be limited to one individual; limited to a small group of closely related individuals; it can be extended over a village or over a neighbourhood comprising several neighbouring villages; a larger area which tends to be associated with a chief, a senior headman or a localized clan-segment; a localized ethnic group (tribe); or a group of neighbouring tribes. This series represents a hierarchy of residential and political units; a quite different dimension is manifested in the cultic group, whose recruitment typically cuts across residential, kinship and political ties — as is the case with the modern shrine cults that I have discussed elsewhere.¹⁷

Ideas associated with the shrines revolve around two major issues: the goals and effects the believers hope to achieve through the activi-

ties at the shrine, and the nature of the invisible entities to whom the shrines refer.

For these goals it seems fruitful to distinguish between the domestic sphere (ranging, on our scale, from individual to neighbourhood) and the wider, interlocal sphere. Shrine activities in the interlocal sphere focus around two fundamentally different though frequently merging principles: concern for a land area (the territorial cult), and chieftainship. Territorial shrine cults aim at ensuring the success of the ecological activities in which the population is engaged (horticulture, fishing, hunting, husbandry) and hence at the material, and ultimately moral, well-being of this population. Annual planting and first-fruit ceremonies form a common (though not universal)¹⁸ element throughout Zambia, and these are supplemented by occasional ceremonies in times of crisis (drought, famine, pests). Shrines associated with chieftainship are either chiefly graves or relic shrines containing the paraphernalia of deceased predecessors (such as drums, gongs, bow-stands, and axes); access to them may be limited to the ruler himself. These chiefly shrines play a major role in accession to chieftainship; their main function is to be a source of legitimacy for the ruler. Chiefly shrines tend to assume ecological connotations, following a dialectical process which we shall explore below.

On the domestic level, village and neighbourhood shrines have primarily territorial ecological reference. However, in addition to this they may serve individual purposes as places where the living member of the village reports to the invisible, deceased members of the village community when departing for or coming back from a long journey,¹⁹ and the village shrines set the scene for rituals dealing with affliction attributed to ancestors.²⁰ The shrines which kinsmen erect on the grave of a deceased (usually after being summoned to do so at the latter's deathbed, or later, through dreams or illness) do not primarily serve an ecological purpose but rather spring from concern for individual health and ultimately refer not to the land but to the local minimal kin-group. Finally, there is a type of individual shrine, apparently universal in Zambia, by which the individual specialist tries to enhance his professional success by reference to direct ancestors or mythical beings associated with his skill: honey-collecting, hunting, fishing, rain-calling, ironworking, dancing, divining and healing.²¹ Many of these skills have a direct ecological orientation; but even so, their primary concern is the ecological success of the single individual with whom they are associated, rather than the general well-being of the land and of the total community.

The participants' goals and purposes in the shrine cults refer to

invisible entities associated with the shrines. There exists a remarkable variety: recently deceased members of the kin group; lineage spirits in general; deceased local celebrities (diviners, dancers, doctors, hunters); deceased chiefs; a class of land spirits that lack historical or anthropomorphic connotations, are anonymous and are normally referred to as a collectivity (such as 'ngulu',²² 'wowa');²³ culture heroes;²⁴ the High God;²⁵ and finally the abstract, but often personified concepts that are at the core of modern cults of affliction and that sometimes merge with the anonymous collective land spirits.²⁶

These ideological aspects are related to the shrine cults in such a way as to suggest a systematic pattern. First, there are hardly any non-modern shrines recorded as being directly and exclusively associated with the High God; the few examples in the literature consist of: a temporary rain shrine among the Kaonde,²⁷ a cursory remark on Lozi village shrines,²⁸ and the case of the supreme Chewa medium, Makewana, who reputedly communicated directly with the High God and whose sphere of influence extended well into Zambia — even far beyond the effective sphere of political influence of Undi's kingdom.²⁹ Secondly, cults which the participants associate with deceased kinsmen, local celebrities and lineage spirits are largely limited to the domestic level;³⁰ whereas, for obvious reasons, the cult of deceased chiefs belongs to the interlocal level. Thirdly, there are few shrine cults reported which unite, in their effective ritual activities and in their ideological references, more than one tribe; those that do are territorial cults associated either with land spirits³¹ or with the High God.

Let us finally turn to the organizational side of shrine cults in Zambia. Usually there is a small minority of officiants as against a majority of participants or onlookers. Participation at the interlocal level (whether with ecological or with chiefly emphasis) tends to be restricted to holders of office, and the cult tends to have specialist control by priests, chiefs or both in that the priests have to obtain the chief's permission to perform a ritual. Organization at the domestic level is more open and normally all members of the local community can participate, although women and children may be excluded; leadership, reflecting the general local authority structure, lies either with the village headman, or with a ritual leader who may be the custodian of the village or neighbourhood shrine and who sometimes also practises other religious specialities such as divining. Well described for the Tonga,³² but probably also occurring elsewhere, is a division of labour between the secular ritual leader, responsible for the shrine and the performance of the shrine ritual, and the inspired medium who is the mouthpiece of the invisible entities with whom com-

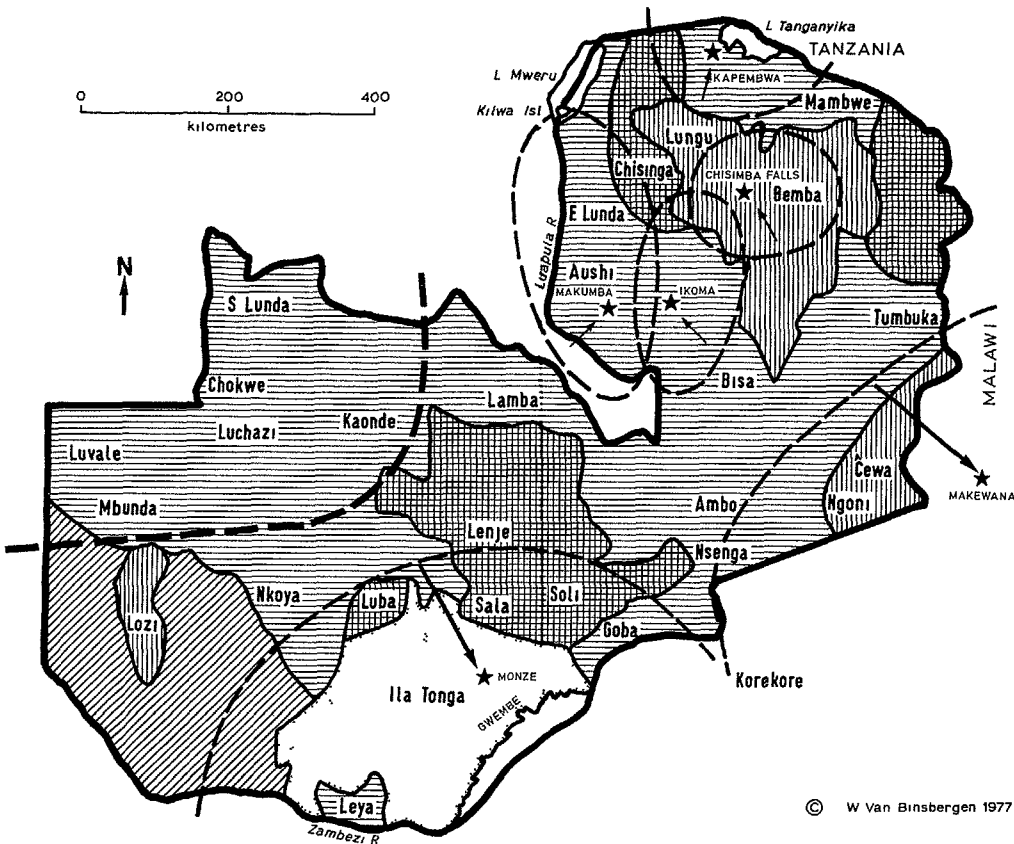
munication is established during the ritual. However, information on Zambian specialist mediumship other than in modern possession movements is still too scanty to explore this issue further.³³ The same applies to the widespread Central African institution of the 'spirit wife', a woman (in some local variations represented by a male priest) who has never married or who has given up her marriage in order to engage in a close relationship with the spirit of the shrine. Scattered indications in the literature³⁴ suggest that on further research this feature may turn out to be as common in Zambia as it is in Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Tentative typology and distribution: With gross oversimplification, the above discussion leaves us with the following main types of shrines and shrine cults for twentieth-century Zambia:

- (a) Shrines (natural or man-made) associated with interlocal territorial concern and normally in the control of priests; they have an irregular yet widespread distribution in Zambia, apart from the north-west of the country.³⁵
- (b) Shrines primarily associated with chieftainship (relic shrines, graves) and only secondarily with ecological functions; they are controlled by chiefs, priests or grave-keepers, and have a limited distribution.
- (c) Shrines primarily associated with chieftainship (kingship) but having major ecological connotations at the same time; controlled by chiefs, priests or grave-keepers, they have a limited distribution.
- (d) Village and neighbourhood shrines, pertaining to a territorial cult and controlled by ritual leaders (in association with mediums) and elders; though varying in physical features, this type of shrine seems to have a universal distribution.
- (e) Individual shrines, controlled by the individual concerned and associated with a particular (primarily ecological) skill; although more data is needed, this type again seems to have universal distribution.
- (f) Modern shrines, controlled by individuals or cross-cutting sections of the community and associated with either cults of affliction or such universalist religions as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism; as a type, they have attained universal distribution in contemporary Zambia. They fall outside the scope of this chapter.

Despite the enormous gaps in our material, it is useful to attempt to map out the geographical distribution of those types of shrine cults

that do not have universal distribution. The result of such an exercise is Map 2.



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|--|---|--|--|
| | National chiefly shrine cult with important ecological functions | | Major priestly shrine |
| | Chiefly shrine cult with secondary ecological functions | | Indicates the shrine to which a particular region belongs |
| | Information lacking or difficult to classify but probably chiefly shrine cult with secondary ecological functions | | Approximate boundary of the region of a major priestly shrine |
| | Chiefly shrine cult absent | | To the north west of this life no evidence of interlocal priestly shrine cults |
| | Information lacking or difficult to classify but probably chiefly shrine cult absent | | Present day international boundary |

Map 2 Territorial Cults in Zambia

The typology and map presented in this section are only starting points, suggestive of the enormous amount of research that yet has to be undertaken. For the time being, they are nearly all the solid data we have; even in their very imperfect form they shall have to guide us through the following sections of this essay.

Shrines, Ecology and the Community

The ecological perspective: Shrine cults in Zambia tend to have a strong ecological emphasis: they tend to be territorial cults. Therefore, let us set a framework within which this emphasis can be understood and appreciated as being of literally vital importance to the cultivators, cattle-keepers, fishermen and gatherers that for many centuries have made up Zambia's population.

If there is one social science tradition which is, in more than one respect, down-to-earth, it is the one exemplified by such eminent researchers as Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard, who in their major works have attempted to describe non-industrial societies with emphasis on the close and complex links between social organization and environment — the way in which man, with application of all his technical and organizational skill and intelligence, transforms his natural world so that it becomes liveable, human, and social. Studies of systems of cultivation or food preparation may not directly appeal to the student of religion, yet they deal with a primary concern from which the participants derive much of what gives their lives meaning and orientation, much of their symbolism and ritual. The process of ecological transformation of nature forms a major element in the religious system of any society with a subsistence economy. In order to really understand such a religion, we should perhaps accompany our informants to the fields, share their anxiety during a hunting expedition or even live through a minor famine with them.

It is not by accident that the first truly modern sociological study of a Zambian people (Audrey Richards's *Land, Labour and Diet*) focuses on ecology, but at the same time contains one of the most comprehensive accounts of a Zambian religious system.

Natural and individual shrines in the ecological perspective: The existence of natural, non-man-made shrines becomes more intelligible within the ecological perspective. In a subsistence economy the landscape is never completely humanized — everywhere places remain which have never been subjected to man's ecological transformations or which, once used, have been abandoned again. These places are of

great significance: they tend to represent the hidden forces on which man draws for his survival but which, on the other hand, are only too prone to harm him. 'Wild' places play a prominent part in the religions of peoples engaged in a subsistence economy. In order to become true foci of religious activities, all that seems necessary is that these places be localized and somehow stand out among the other natural objects in the landscape. Hills, pools, imposing trees, caves, streams, falls and rapids become associated with invisible entities, and thus become objects of veneration. A similar argument will be used below to interpret man-made shrines.

These natural objects are outside the cycle of ecological transformations and do not serve any direct utilitarian purpose for the people concerned. The opposite is true for those aspects of the ecological process that are too important and too uncertain to be left to chance. A clear example is hunting, which among several Zambian peoples³⁶ has acquired mystical characteristics, including: great social and sexual privileges; the development of numerous medicines to make the hunt successful (or meant for other purposes but derived from killed game); the veneration of mythical hunters; the frequent attribution of affliction cases to deceased hunters; ritual hunts as part of the healing of such affliction and as a divination technique in general; and finally the erection of hunters' shrines. Much of the same applies to such other important operations as fishing, honey-collecting, iron-working and doctoring (the latter is an 'ecological' operation in so far as it implies the selection and processing of raw natural material into medicine). The individual shrines commonly associated with these specialties form, in a way, the beacons that mark these essential transformations of nature.

The shrine is a spot in the landscape where a concentration takes place of activities directed to invisible entities who are supposed to be capable of influencing the visible world in one way or another. Concentrating here on shrines with strong ecological connotations, the influence of these invisible entities is associated with ecological processes, respectively with natural conditions for such processes. Now when we arrange the everyday ecological processes (planting, hunting, fishing, collecting firewood and other bush products, building a house, etc.) and the ecological shrine activities in one diagram, the result is something like Table II.

Like any socio-cultural complex, shrine activities (a) and the ecological process (b) have a formal, if you wish symbolic structure of their own: the integrated configuration of concepts, objects and activities by which such a complex can be defined, recognized, understood and re-

Table II
SHRINE RITUAL AND
EVERYDAY ECOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES COMPARED

	<i>Type of Activity</i>	
	<i>(a) Directed to Man-made Ecological Shrines</i>	<i>(b) Everyday Ecological</i>
Type of Area Involved	sharply localized small area	much more extended area, not so sharply bound as the shrine
The Activity Viewed as Ecological Transformation	no immediate effect visible; the activity only becomes meaningful through a local theory of causation which postulates invisible entities associated with the shrine	effect is immediately visible, utilitarian, and inherently meaningful because it satisfies physiological needs and is interpretable with everyday experience within the visible world.

produced, either by the participants or (analytically) by the observer. Table II summarizes the bare outlines of the formal structure of (a) and (b) on the analytical level. Thus it brings out a very crucial point about the relations between shrine activities and everyday ecological activities: their respective formal structures are largely symmetrical and complement one another as if forming one whole. Table II suggests that the ecological shrine forms a unique complement — an actional, symbolic and spatial counterpoint — to the everyday ecological activities. The ecological shrine is not a more or less accidental epiphenomenon, grown upon the utilitarian ecological process. A much more intimate bond exists between the two: one is the mirror image of the other.

One might suggest that the unity of these two formal structures (clad with whatever their local cultural idiosyncrasies, in matters such as the actual construction of the shrine, the actual ritual, or the actual ecological activities) contains the clue for the almost universal distribution, not just in Central Africa, but on a world-wide basis, of man-made ecological shrines in societies with subsistence economies. For such societies depend on primary ecological processes. Therefore, if it can be made plausible that ritual focusing around man-made ecological shrines forms an obvious, intrinsic counterpart to these ecological processes, then we have advanced a little towards understanding the ubiquity of such ritual. But unfortunately the only way to arrive at some plausible explanations here is through an abstract thought experiment, far removed from the explicitly conscious notions of any participants, and along the weak methodology of 'phenomenological' interpretation.

Man's everyday ecological activities in such societies have, among others, the following characteristics: they are inherently meaningful to the participant for they relate to his immediate physiological needs, involve a large amount of chance, and are directed toward rather extensive parts of the landscape, such as a garden plot or a hunting area. But ritual needs a somewhat more defined and more localized focus than a plot or a hunting area. One solution is the adoption of movable ritual objects (such as amulets, medicine, or a royal bracelet), while another is the adoption of invisible entities with whom man can in principle communicate anywhere; but even so, a material focus would be convenient. Since everyday ecological activity is concentrated upon the landscape, the most obvious solution is to create a concentrated spot where ritual will have an effect upon the total ecological system involved.

The basic philosophy unconsciously underlying the ecological

shrine might then perhaps be reconstructed as follows: 'If there is a high chance (i.e., uncertainty, failure) element in the extended landscape, let us isolate one small part of that very landscape, and perform some (ritual) operations upon this small part which — through a process of transfer — will influence the (utilitarian) operations in the wider landscape so as to transform chance into fortune.'

This tentative formula sums up the very close intimacy between ecological shrine cult and the everyday ecological process. First, the construction of the man-made shrine is a quasi-ecological process in itself. Elements are selected from nature (such as a spot, poles, grass, or bark), transformed and arranged so as to meet a human purpose; the whole 'idiom' of the undertaking is ecological, except that the result (the finished shrine) has no immediately utilitarian reward in terms of physiological needs fulfilled. For instance, although in Zambia the most common hut-like type of shrine is a model of the ordinary human dwelling, the shrine hut does not primarily serve such utilitarian purposes as shelter and storage. The shrine derives its significance from this dialectical combination of identity and difference *vis-à-vis* its non-ritual counterparts. Furthermore, once the ecological shrine has been constructed the ritual activities there can be viewed as a formal rhyme to everyday ecological activities, in that a part of the visible world is manipulated with ultimate reference to man's physiological needs. But again, the ritual is only pseudo-ecological: contrary to ecological activities which require material objects such as tools, the means in ritual are immaterial (words, songs) or sham tools (like the miniature wooden hoe and axe used in ritual in western and north-western Zambia), and the ritual has no perceptible, concrete, immediate result.

The ecological shrine is a model of the world-as-being-humanized, a microcosm in which essentially the same entities which move the ecological macrocosm can be approached through a ritual reminiscent of, but different from everyday ecological activities, and thus (in ways that would not work outside the shrine situation) can be made to render the ecological conditions outside the shrine favourable for man.

This formal analysis is abstracted from actual social and historical forms. The concrete shape of the ritual in ecological shrines can add a lot more colour to our picture; a multitude of invisible entities elbow to catch our attention, and beautiful, archaic and wise rituals take our breath. However, if there is some general, formal structure underlying this colourful surface (and the ubiquity of ecological shrine cults strongly suggests that there is such a fairly uniform structure), then we have to try to discern its principles — even if blundering.³⁷

The village shrine and its dual nature: The speculations developed so far may make the principle of a man-made ecological shrine plausible, but they need elaboration before they can hope to account for entire ecological shrine cults, involving not just one individual hunter or ironworker, but a full human community.

We may generalize that people forming a small-scale community (a village) in a subsistence economy are knit together by common interests and activities which have a primarily, though by no means exclusively, ecological reference. In the same way primarily ecological factors (in Zambia especially the level of minimal annual water supply³⁸) seem to lead to the breaking up of such units and the subsequent founding of new units; although these factors often also manifest themselves on the social plane in local political conflict or witchcraft accusations. Dependent upon each other through the use of the same ecological field, confined by the force of distance and by the claims of surrounding communities, and through a division of labour where members of the small community exchange the fruits of their own efforts (such as food, tools, or medicine) in this field as part-time specialists, the villagers are primarily linked by a common concern with their environment. If, on the basis of more general principles I have attempted to gauge, ecological concern tends to express itself in the erection of ecological shrines, then the creation of ecological *village* shrines seems a logical step. One reason why village shrines are so widespread and prominent in Central Africa is probably that the ecological pressure is most keenly felt on the village level; again, Richards's pioneer study offers a marvellous example of this condition.

But let us guard against economic or ecological determinism. The Central African village is an 'ecological' unit, but it is more. One of the crucial insights of the social sciences battling against various forms of reductionism³⁹ has been that 'the social' creates forms of interaction and of symbolism which must be studied in their own right. Specifically, the village, however ephemeral and prone to disruption, generates a sense of identity which is not just the sum of its internal economic activities and division of labour, and which seeks a charter and a symbol in the social and ritual field, rather than in the ecological. The village shrine can and does serve as such a symbol. It thus performs the dual function of being, at the same time, a focus in the ecological process and a communal rallying point (both socially and ideologically) for the village members.

From the ecological viewpoint, the obvious invisible entities to be associated with a village shrine should be such general beings as collective anonymous land spirits, culture heroes, and the High God;

from the communal point of view, however, the obvious association is with humans who have a direct and specific historical significance for the local community: the village founder,⁴⁰ some other deceased local celebrity, or lineage spirits in general.

This essentially dual nature of the village (or neighbourhood) shrine has not been sufficiently analysed in Colson's studies, which nevertheless provide the best material on shrine cults so far available for Zambia. Colson has presented the shrines as primarily communal, elaborating on their functions in local and interlocal social relations but largely ignoring their ecological significance. Thus she leaves us in the dark as to why precisely *rain* shrines should perform these functions in Tonga society.⁴¹

Meanwhile, it should be borne in mind that the village shrine is not the only possible way to focus communal feelings and actions at the village level. In a large part of Zambia a village is characterized by the men's shelter at its centre, where most male social and communal activities apart from economic ones are concentrated.⁴² Often the shelter is located only a few metres from the village shrine.⁴³ Although in the unifying and rallying functions of the shelter the secular aspect dominates, it reminds us of a shrine in that access to it is restricted (women and children should not enter the shelter), and in that it is a place for libation, since beer is served here. Thus, though the communal and ecological references of shrine and shelter merge to some extent, their double presence in a village can be viewed as a far from strict dissociation between these two aspects, the shrine being primarily ecological, the shelter primarily communal.

Interlocal shrines: On the interlocal level the shrine becomes the symbol of the effective political group, and particularly of its leadership (headman, chief). From this viewpoint, irrespective even of ecological implications, the erection of a communal shrine is a claim to autonomy as a social and political unit.⁴⁴ Along the same lines, removal of a shrine is a manifestation of migration; the decline of certain shrines and the rise of other shrines within the same geographical area is a manifestation of shifts in group composition and political alignment;⁴⁵ maintenance of relations with a distant shrine is an admission of imperfect autonomy *vis-à-vis* the distant group associated with that shrine;⁴⁶ while for immigrants and invaders the destruction of pre-existing shrines is a meaningful way to destroy local religious power structures and to assert themselves as a new, socially and religiously superior group.⁴⁷

If shrines perform these essentially political functions, then we

expect political leaders (clan heads, headmen, chiefs) to associate themselves with shrines as visible symbols of their political autonomy and of their legitimacy. Again, this association does not necessarily imply an ecological function for these 'chiefly' shrines; the duality between communal and ecological function, so manifest at the village level, could at the higher interlocal levels very well be dissociated to such an extent that different series of shrines specialize in either the ecological or the communal-political function. Though in some Zambian cases (particularly the Bemba) royal shrines claim the monopoly of both political and ecological power, chiefly shrines without elaborate ecological functions are more the general rule (Map 2). In the latter case the chiefly shrines provide political legitimacy and the focus for royal ritual, particularly in case of accession to office, since they contain royal attributes or the remains of deceased rulers. Ecological functions are then primarily fulfilled by other shrine systems: shrines associated with priests in an interlocal cult, village shrines, and those associated with individual specialists. Yet, if the ecological functions of chiefly shrines are usually not elaborate, few if any totally lack ecological connotations. Chiefly cults tend to supplement, as a last resort, the regular non-chiefly ecological cults in times of great crisis. Ritual control over the land (exercised directly, or through supervision of interlocal ecological priests and ritual leaders) seems to provide the most adequate legitimation of political power exercised by chiefs. Thus the dual nature of the domestic shrine tends to have a counterpart in the communal-political and, at the same time, ecological functions of the chiefly shrine at the highest interlocal levels.

We could leave it at this, and simply view the variety of chiefly, priestly, and village shrine cults with communal, ecological or combined emphasis, as the timeless manifestations of the fundamental duality of the shrine above the individual level. There is, however, a much more attractive though ill-documented alternative on which we shall elaborate below: the interpretation of the variety of shrine cults as the outcome of a historical process, in which shrines and the ecological claims associated with them have been manipulated in a prolonged contest over power and legitimacy — a contest between secular immigrant rulers and earlier territorial priests.

Chiefs and Shrines in Zambia's History

Zambian societies before the Luba expansion: Zambia's early history is still very dim. Oral traditions do not normally penetrate deeper than the sixteenth or seventeenth century; in the Tonga case they are said to

reach only to the early nineteenth century. Moreover, despite its tremendous achievements in recent years, Zambian archaeology is by no means capable yet of depicting in some detail the political and religious features of the Zambian societies before the Luba expansion.

Yet a speculative model can be drawn. By extrapolation of recent work on early Malawi and southern Tanzania,⁴⁸ we can postulate that some form of a shrine cult existed in eastern and northern Zambia at least half a millenium ago. Some traditional evidence even suggests that aspects of the Central African territorial cults have a pre-Bantu origin.⁴⁹ Moreover, there is some evidence⁵⁰ that peoples not unlike the Tonga and Ila have occupied much of eastern, central and southern Zambia since the first centuries of the present millenium. Finally, there are indications that the chieftainships which, as part of the Luba expansion since about 1500, were established in Zambia, were generally imposed upon peoples who had already been settled in their areas for some time, and who had no centralized political system involving chiefs but instead a little-developed segmentary system of mutually feuding clans or clan segments.⁵¹

This hints at a type of society consisting of small units of gatherers, husbandmen or shifting cultivators, with only an informal type of secular leadership presumably based not so much on ascription as on the skilful manipulation of immediate economic and kinship relationships during one's lifetime. Such political leadership is in itself hardly capable of checking the structural tendency towards small-scale warfare over ecological resources, women, and honour; on the contrary, it can be said to need violent conflict since this provides a setting in which the leader's service is most valuable.

Much of social anthropology in the 1930s-1950s was concerned with this type of society;⁵² the notions of segmentation, complementary opposition and unilineal descent groups were primarily conceived and tested in the analysis of such societies as the Nuer, Tallensi, Alur and Somali. In retrospect much of this work remains too faithful to neat armchair models and diagrams. Deeper insights into the actual complex mechanisms of feuding, complementary opposition, reconciliation, and into the acephalous political order in general, were mainly obtained from those areas where the classical segmentation model, after initial trials, turned out not to fit properly. Such areas are North Africa,⁵³ New Guinea,⁵⁴ and particularly Central Africa, where the absence of real segmentary lineages was realized many years ago⁵⁵ and where some of the most brilliant work of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute researchers (even where conducted in societies with formal

chieftainship) provided new models for the interpretation of this type of society.⁵⁶

In the older studies the essential process of arbitration in acephalous societies was mainly presented as lying in the hands of informal secular authorities. It is only in the last few years that North African studies have begun to yield a new, probably widely applicable, model of the way in which religious authorities within a shrine cult can become a central element of social control in an acephalous society. In rural North Africa, pacifist priestly lineages administered widely dispersed shrines amid secular groups engaged in constant feuding. By virtue of their religious status, the supernatural sanctions surrounding them, their backing from third secular groups, and the general recognition of their indispensability to all the feuding parties involved, these shrine keepers ('saints') could successfully operate as judges and arbiters in feuds, meanwhile accumulating impressive wealth from donations and their protection of trade.⁵⁷

In the absence of concrete data I cannot suggest that shrine cults in pre-Luba Zambia have performed a similar function. Yet if the later forms of the Tonga and Ila social systems can to some extent be extrapolated back into time, some very interesting insights emerge.

The closest resemblance to the North African model is found among the Ila,⁵⁸ where priestly custodians of the shrines (groves) of such major land spirits as Shimunenga and Munyama are reported to receive compensation in cattle in case of murder in the local community. Moreover, these groves served as neutral meeting grounds where emissaries from other areas could solicit the local community's assistance in war.⁵⁹ Compensatory payments to the shrine's ritual leader existed also among the Gwembe Tonga⁶⁰ and remained effective up to the first decades of this century. Although Colson feels compelled to deny the ritual leaders all political and judicial significance and mentions the territorial cult only once in her famous work on Tonga social control,⁶¹ yet she claims in her rain shrine paper that the shrine cult is 'still the fundamental element in Tonga social structure'⁶² and that it creates a small community within which the rudiments of community law can be discerned and which forces its members to remember occasionally that they belong to a wider unit than the village or kin-group.⁶³ Similarly, mediums among the neighbouring Valley Korekore are described by Garbett⁶⁴ as playing a major role in the settlement of disputes, both at the domestic village level and in chiefly succession.

Thus in the recent Zambian context the territorial cult could form a major source of social control. This potential is given in the dual,

dialectical nature of the shrine. It is a symbol of the local group, and as such it is charged, much in the vein of the classic analysis of Durkheim,⁶⁵ with the authority that the group exercises over its members as basis and source of legitimacy for the normative system. At the same time the shrine is a symbol of the ecological processes upon which depends the very life of the community and of its individual members — processes which are supposed to be negatively influenced, again, if the members misbehave with regard to the natural order (disrespectful use of natural resources), the social order (murder, incest, sorcery), or the shrine itself. An additional factor is that the social positions (priest, medium) in which the territorial cult invests authority, often devolve on people who, through birth or way of life, tend to be outsiders (and therefore potential arbiters) to the general process of secular social life.

The Tonga, Ila and Korekore territorial cults promote social control in contemporary societies that have diffuse and limited political leadership. Thus the territorial cult in general may form an alternative to highly developed chieftainship; where chieftainship is limited or incipient, it can be supplemented or antagonized by the political functions of the territorial cult; we can even postulate that the territorial cult is capable of creating a rudimentary form of social control in situations where specialized secular political organization is altogether absent.

If we accept that the Zambian societies before the Luba expansion were either acephalous or had only limited and incipient forms of chieftainship, then we can assume that priestly territorial cults played an important role in the maintenance of some social and political order beyond the village level.

From about 1500 onward, this type of society was exposed to bands of immigrants who brought different conceptions of social control: a new political culture, focusing on the exalted position of the chief or king.⁶⁶ Hitherto this political revolution in Zambia has been presented in two versions: as the imposition (through force, but equally through persuasion) of a political order where previously there had been virtually none;⁶⁷ or as the replacement of a rudimentary secular political order by a more developed and centralized one.⁶⁸ Both views ignore the possibility of a pre-existing politico-religious order based on the territorial cult. A third view emerges which presents the Luba expansion as, among other aspects, a battle against the religiously-anchored political power invested in the territorial cult.

If there is some truth in this hypothesis, it should enable us to re-interpret this political expansion process in Zambia, and moreover to

throw some light on evidence not yet explicitly accounted for in the literature. This will be the theme of the remainder of this section.

The confrontation between immigrant chiefs and earlier territorial cults in Bemba history: Let us first consider the evidence for a religious dimension to Luba expansion in the case of one Zambian kingdom: the Bemba. Some mythical evidence is contained in the tradition about the filial conflict which drove Nkole and Chiti away from their homeland to establish the Bemba kingdom:

as a result of some project⁶⁹ of Chiti and Nkole, people were killed and Mukulumpe made his sons do menial punishments, such as sweeping the royal yard. When further tasks of *cleaning the shrines* were given, Chiti refused and his men killed the men his father sent to beat him. They and their people then left⁷⁰

The mythical accounts of the brothers' further exploits contain at least two other hints at what could have been a religious dimension: their repeated encounters with the friendly white-skinned *nganga*, Lucheche, on whose intervention and favourable divination their entry into Bemband ultimately depended, and the hitting of a tree with a spear when finally taking possession of the territory.

It is important that the latter two mythical themes are not confined to Bemba tradition but have a wide distribution among the Luba-ized peoples of Central Africa.⁷¹ This means that if these themes can be taken as manifestations of the hypothetical conflict between immigrating chiefs and the earlier territorial cult, this conflict might be postulated among these other peoples, although of course we have to consider the possibility of myths being diffused irrespective of the historical events to which the myths originally referred.

Interpretation of the three themes in terms of my hypothesis does not seem too far fetched. The religious content is clearest in the shrine-cleaning episode; the myth contains evidence of some religious conflict in the very beginning of Bemba expansion — although it might be argued that the myth in the version given here should be interpreted as an attempt to assert politico-religious independence by rejection of the parental groups' shrines, rather than as evidence of conflict between the royal immigrants and a local shrine cult in Bemband. The tree, in the second theme, is the very prototype of a natural shrine in Zambia, and hitting a tree shrine with a spear is a very audacious challenge; hence this theme could be interpreted as the memory of a spectacular challenge to earlier territorial cults by the immigrants. Finally, although the character of Lucheche remains dim, as a specialist in religious matters he has unmistakably 'ecological' connotations,

such as divining by producing a fish in a basket — in an area where much of the ecological ritual is in fact concerned with fishing.⁷² He may be considered as a symbol of the 'ecological' powers, and of the territorial cult that deals with them, upon whose agreement and co-operation political success depends.⁷³

These general mythical themes therefore provide some slight evidence for my hypothesis. Fortunately the religious aspects of early Bemba history have recently been subjected to careful study by Werner.⁷⁴ On the basis of other evidence he arrives at conclusions rather similar to mine.

Mainly on the basis of the occurrence of priest-councillors from clans that otherwise have no political significance in the Bemba political structure,⁷⁵ Werner postulates that when the *vena ngandu* royal clan of the Bemba developed its ancestral cult into a national chiefly cult, it had to accommodate earlier chiefs within its religious structure. These chiefs, Werner claims on Roberts's authority,⁷⁶ did not belong to the royal clan but they largely shared the general Bemba culture. They are said to represent an immigrant majority that reached Bemband not long before the *vena ngandu* themselves.

The religious powers which these men exerted as the ritual leaders of their small territories were . . . incorporated into a much larger system in which the ancestral spirit of the *vena ngandu* chief became the ritual focus of the territory Religious powers of earlier chiefs were eclipsed The ancestors of previous chiefs were forgotten It would appear that as earlier chiefs were assimilated by the Chitimukulu dynasty, the political leadership which preceded *vena ngandu* rule . . . was undermined and the ritual powers held by the previous chiefs were transferred from their own group affiliations to those of the *vena ngandu*.⁷⁷

Werner clearly recognizes that the Luba expansion had religious aspects in addition to the salient political aspects; to consolidate and legitimize the immigrant dynasty, a royal cult had to be developed that could compete with, encapsulate, and so accommodate, earlier politico-religious authorities. Yet there are gaps in Werner's argument, particularly when it comes to identifying these earlier authorities. If the 'chiefs' who were to be caught in the *vena ngandu* political and ritual structure were essentially newcomers, still trying to consolidate themselves politically, how could they already claim the interlocal ritual control over the land that is the prerogative of 'original' inhabitants? What real evidence is there that these earlier 'chiefs' in fact combined secular-political and religious functions? And, supposed

they combined both functions, why should they have entered the *benangandu* structure as priest-councillors, rather than as tributary secular chiefs — in other words, why should they have been deprived of their secular rather than of their ritual connotations? Werner would probably agree that the creation of a unitary ritual system controlled by the *benangandu* was as essential a concern of the immigrant dynasty as the creation of a unitary political system; depriving politico-religious authorities of their ritual connotations could be one way to achieve such a unitary ritual system.

It seems that Werner's argument stagnates in his use of an ill-defined and ill-analysed concept of 'chief'. We cannot blame him, since 'chief' is the most frequently used concept in African history and political sociology. Yet if we continue to apply this word to any type of traditional authority without analysing in as much detail as possible the political, religious and economic components of this authority — if we continue to assume that these components, throughout Zambian history, always tend to coincide — then we cannot hope for progress in our analysis and understanding. Therefore, what is a chief?

Linguistic evidence does not help us very much here. The Bemba word 'mfumu' has the following equivalents in English: political authorities ranging from 'king', via 'senior chief', 'chief', 'senior headman' to the lowest level of 'village headman'; 'owners of the land' or 'land priests' with ritual rather than political connotations; and finally, invisible entities associated with shrines and territorial ritual,⁷⁸ entities that may be traceable in local tradition as spirits of deceased political authorities, but that often lack such historical political connotations and then are better described as 'anonymous land spirits' or perhaps 'saints'. This only suggests that, on the participants' level, there is evidence of a general conceptual system in which little differentiation is made between spiritual authority, secular authority, and manifestations of invisible entities with ecological relevance. Such an insight is important for us, but it is not enough. We are not just interested in how the participants see their society — their views form only one of the entries through which we hope to approach the historical and sociological reality, including its more objective aspects. In the last analysis we have to forge and define our own scientific terms with greater precision than the participants need or can even afford.

It is remarkable that the only serious criticism of the indiscriminate use of the concept of 'chief' for academic and administrative purposes in relation to Zambia came as late as 1960⁷⁹ — and that Apthorpe, with this attack on what he called 'mythical political structures', met with so little response. His own argument lacked some con-

sistency. On the one hand he claimed (with particular reference to the Zambian chiefs outside the great dynasties of Lozi, Bemba, Ngoni, Undi and Kazembe) that

in much of Northern Rhodesia, the present state of social anthropological and sociological knowledge suggests that perhaps there never has been a ritual or spiritual life surrounding chieftainship and related institutions to the same great extent which was . . . characteristic of some other parts of Bantu-speaking Africa.⁸⁰

On the other hand he largely failed to give concrete evidence as to the relative absence of a ritual role for the minor chiefs. Moreover, his own study of the Nsenga⁸¹ elaborates precisely on the spiritual basis of Nsenga (minor) chieftainship: the chief's relic shrine.

Yet Apthorpe points out a very weak spot in Central African studies. The variety of types of authority should not be concealed by calling them all 'chiefs', and assuming that under this general label the different types will automatically merge. I shrink from developing here all the permutations of formal authority in traditional Zambian societies; and in fact, the term 'chief' is so inveterate that trying to avoid it altogether would amount to spasmodic artificiality. Let me merely suggest that we need at least three crude basic categories:

- (a) The ruler, who specializes in politics: the manipulation of power relationships in the process of the social allocation of scarce goods (land, labour, food, trade commodities, women).
- (b) The priest, who specializes in religion: the manipulation of relationships with invisible entities, as relevant to such matters as ecology and legitimation of political structures.
- (c) The ruler-priest, who more or less equally combines the above specialities and who may well be as rare, on the Zambian scene, as Apthorpe suggests.

These tentative definitions do not imply the absence of secondary ritual functions for the ruler or of secondary political functions (such as arbitration) for the priest. They only claim that it is useful to distinguish between two institutional frameworks that are analytically (though perhaps not in the perception of the participants) disparate and not mutually reducible. Let me finally emphasize that the definitions do not specify a level or scale for the authority that is exercised: in principle, they apply to the domestic as well as to the inter-tribal level.

We can go back now to Werner's reconstruction of early Bemba history. The crucial question is: to what type of pre-*benangandu* histori-

cal authority (if any) does the institution of non-royal Bemba authorities refer? If Werner's answer is somehow unsatisfactory, for the reasons outlined above, what tentative alternative can we discern?

The *benangandu* came late in the process of Luba expansion. The society upon which they tried to impose their domination mainly consisted of similar groups of earlier Luba immigrants, and the latter had already been involved for some time in a process of religious and political accommodation with the 'original', pre-Luba population. Above, I postulated that pre-Luba society did have priests, but probably lacked formal rulers; political functions may have been exerted by informal, non-ascriptive leaders on clan or sub-clan level, or, failing even these, may have been in the hands of priestly arbitrators — without these priests being 'ruler-priests' exercising genuine political control. There is some fragmentary traditional evidence of a pre-Bemba priesthood, associated with such prominent natural shrines as the Chisimba Falls near Kasama.⁸² The earlier Luba immigrants, preceding the *benangandu*, began to build up ruler status — but they could not effectively claim ritual power over the land, and thus had no easy access, for the time being, to priestly status. Yet, in accordance with my general hypothesis, they may have started already to boost their ancestral rituals in rivalry with the pre-Luba territorial cult. Pre-Luba priests, perhaps deprived of their political functions of arbitration, would continue to act as territorial priests. Those previously eligible for the rudimentary pre-Luba secular political leadership (if it existed at all) could now try to penetrate the Luba ranks, or alternatively could play off their status of original inhabitants and seek an outlet in the assumption of priestly functions as well. While still in a nascent state, this Luba-izing political system was then invaded by the *benangandu*. What interest would the latter have had in ritually formalizing their relationship with their kindred earlier Luba immigrants, by making them priest-councillors? The similarity in culture and origin and the relatively short stay of the earlier immigrants in the area did not justify such a move. The interests of the *benangandu* were clearly with the pre-Luba priests, for these possessed the key to ultimate legitimacy: ritual control over extended land areas. If the existence of non-royal Bemba authorities is the precipitation of an early conflict in *benangandu* history, my argument suggests that this conflict consisted in the encapsulation of pre-Luba territorial priests into the *benangandu* system. Presumably the priest-councillors were not 'chiefs' (that is, rulers or at most ruler-priests) deprived of their political functions, but priests whose religious frame of reference was successfully redefined by the immigrants, and politicized.

A significant demonstration of the same, as yet hypothetical, principle is the case of Shimwalule, the most senior non-royal Bemba authority, who buries the Chitimukulu and who has important 'ecological' functions. There are indications that the Mwalule burial grove at the southern periphery of Bembaland was a territorial cult centre before the *benangandu* came to be buried there, and tradition claims that it was again Luchele who arranged the relationship between the *benangandu* and the Bisa priests of this shrine.⁸³

What we gain from this argument is not only a modification of Werner's reconstruction, but also an insight that may have more general applicability to the Luba expansion into Zambia — the hypothesis that 'owners of the land' may not only or primarily have defeated earlier 'chiefs', but have encapsulated earlier territorial priests.

A comparative overview of the confrontation between rulers and territorial cults in Zambian history: We can now try to generalize the insights derived from our review of early Bemba history. From the sixteenth century onward, Zambian societies were invaded by groups aspiring to establish themselves as rulers. The immigrants found themselves in a situation where they did not command legitimate authority. Their conception of politics, however, required that their leadership, won as it might have been through small-scale conquest or opportunist submission by local peoples, become supported as soon as possible by a structure of political relations, and political-mythical concepts and ritual, which would have legitimacy in the eyes of their newly acquired subjects. This attempt at legitimation brought them into conflict with pre-existing foci of legitimated social control — the priestly territorial cults in their political functions of arbitration and interlocal communication. Within the social and ecological framework explored above, the most obvious source of legitimacy must have consisted of ritual relations with the extended land territory and with the ecological process — a form of religious power newcomers could not automatically claim. So the best strategy for the immigrants was to claim ecological powers rivalling those of the priests but deriving from a new principle. One way to achieve this appears to have been the claim, by the immigrants, of having their own direct access to what is the principal concern of the territorial cults: rain. Descent from 'Rain', or from the High God mainly associated with rain, is claimed by, for example, the royal lineages of Lozi, Luchazi and Nkoya.⁸⁴ The general solution for the immigrants, however, was to create a type of shrine which, while associated with chieftainship (chiefly relics and graves) and effectively controlled by the chiefly

group, yet could claim to have an ecological impact comparable to that of the earlier priestly cult.

It should be noted that such a strategy, whether taken deliberately or followed unconsciously by the actors, need not have been so revolutionary as may be suggested by my presentation here. In view of the universality of village shrines in Central Africa, we can safely claim that on the domestic level all aspiring rulers were in fact associated from the very beginning with communal shrines that, by virtue of their dual nature, had ecological connotations — but on a very small geographical scale. The religious rivalry with earlier interlocal territorial cults simply required an enlargement of scale of these domestic shrine cults associated with the aspiring rulers — rather than the invention of a completely new type of interlocal ecological royal shrine. As was suggested by Werner for the *bena ngandu*, the development of royal territorial cults lay within the potential of the general domestic territorial cult.

If the confrontation between immigrant chiefs and earlier interlocal territorial cults did in fact take the course suggested above, then the typology and distribution of types of shrine cults as discussed in the first section must be interpretable in terms of this confrontation. I shall now attempt such an interpretation.

Further research will have to reveal to what extent chiefly shrines formed a local adaptation of the immigrants facing the challenge of an indigenous territorial cult, or rather, reflected the diffusion of a trait already existing in the Luba and Lunda homelands. There is no doubt that the notion of the chief or king having supernatural powers over the land belonged to the original Lunda political culture, but these powers seem to have been vested in movable attributes (particularly the royal bracelet of human penises) rather than in shrines.⁸⁵

In this light it is significant that the chiefs of the north-western part of Zambia have retained the original attributes. As we have seen, this part of Zambia is exceptional in that no evidence of a non-chiefly territorial cult above the individual and village level has been recorded.⁸⁶ If we extrapolate that in effect no interlocal territorial cult of the type postulated for pre-Lunda Zambian societies existed in the north-west, then the strong suggestion emerges that a chiefly territorial cult was particularly developed in those parts of Zambia where the immigrants met with a strong challenge from a pre-existing priestly cult. If pre-Lunda north-western Zambia lacked both rulers and interlocal territorial cults, there would have existed a need for an outsider arbitrating institution; and the literature emphasizes that the Lunda immi-

grants could establish themselves precisely because they could satisfy this need.⁸⁷

Whatever the intricacies of the religious history of north-western Zambia, it is a firm fact that elsewhere in Zambia most immigrant chiefs have developed some form of a royal shrine cult with (though in general only secondary) ecological connotations. Certainly the Bemba formed the most successful case. Here the cult of royal relic shrines, deceased chiefs' capitals and chiefs' burial groves, administered by hereditary priests under control of the royal clan, attained a high complexity and effectively claimed major ecological significance.⁸⁸ In the Bemba case the distinction, so characteristic of Zambian pre-colonial political systems, between original owners of the land and later chiefly immigrants has been largely obliterated: the royal clan became the owners. Yet the continued existence of territorial shrines outside direct chiefly control, the occurrence of non-Bemba priests (of Lungu and Bisa extraction, and including Shimwalule),⁸⁹ and possession by presumably pre-Luba culture heroes and anonymous collective land spirits — the 'people's religion' in this strongly hierarchical society — all this suggests that even among the Bemba the chiefs' hold on religious power was uneasy and likely to be shaken by thorough crises, such as those that occurred in this century and the last.⁹⁰

Considerably less monolithic was the result in two other, not dissimilar great kingdoms: Undi's and that of the Lozi. In both cases the immigrant royal lineages established themselves as the unchallenged owners of the land, and a cult of royal graves was developed which included claims of ecological power. Yet in both cases the ecological functions of the paramount were limited; these functions — significantly associated with royal burial and succession, that is, where chiefly shrines as foci of political legitimation are particularly relevant — mainly resided with groups which (though official ideology tended to underplay or ignore this fact) could be regarded as previous owners of the land: in the Lozi case the commoner (predominantly Mbunda?) priests, in the Chewa case the Banda clan that administered the priestly territorial cult headed by Makewana.⁹¹

The Lozi-Undi pattern is further developed to a unique form in the Eastern Lunda kingdom of Kazembe. Here the relationship between pre-Lunda owners of the land and the Lunda immigrants is explicitly recognized and forms the very basis of much of the political, ecological and religious system. Cunnison describes this in terms that again fit my general hypothesis (of a confrontation between chiefs and earlier territorial priests) remarkably well:

The ancestral ritual of the Owners of the Land is generally spoken of as having been the most important ritual in the old days. When the Lunda came, prayer to dead Kazembes was also made, not regularly but in case of drought or special hardship. In addition . . . on such occasions Kazembe would call the Owners of the Land to his capital and tell them that since the country was in a bad way it was fitting that they should all go to their homes and pray to their ancestors on a certain day. Kazembe would also order other sorts of ritual to be carried out generally, for the good of the country.⁹²

But on the latter occasions he would work through the village headmen and not rely on any supernatural power he or his ancestors themselves might claim. In addition to the owners of the land, Kazembe would keep up a respectful contact with three important ecological shrines controlled by priests, one of whom, Mwepya, was recognized as an owner of the land. The most important of these shrines was the Aushi shrine, Makumba, that was originally destroyed by the Lunda invaders but later restored.⁹³ Though Kazembe could theoretically assert himself as the ultimate owner of the land since he defeated the previous 'owner', the legitimacy of his kingship derived not from a direct ritual relationship between king and land but rather from a symbiosis between king and owners of the land, in which the latter enjoyed prestige and protection while paying tribute in recognition of the exalted political status of the king and his representatives. Kazembe's is a rich country which became the most prosperous and powerful of the Luba-Lunda empires. Management of these natural resources required a balanced, harmonious relationship between king and owners of the land. The initial conflict between Lunda invaders and local territorial cults (manifest in the Makumba tradition) dissolved into a situation where Lunda political supremacy was unchallenged while the Lunda on their part acknowledged the religious supremacy of the older cults.

On a smaller scale, chiefly relic shrines and graves with ecological connotations can be found in most of Central Zambia (Map 2). We can agree with Aphorpe that in most cases these minor chiefs' role in ecological ritual is modest, and below I shall present a tentative historical explanation of this fact. My Nkoya material reveals an analytical difficulty in the case of these minor rulers. Among other functions, their status is that of headman of the chiefly village and neighbourhood; the village or neighbourhood shrine, possessing ecological connotations, coincides with the chiefly relic shrine or chiefly graves. While officiating at this chiefly village shrine, must we interpret the minor ruler's religious activities as merely a slightly glorified territo-

rial cult at the domestic level, or must we interpret it as a chiefly ecological cult? Much will depend on the degree of participation of representatives from other parts of the minor ruler's territory, but even so the distinction seems artificial.

In general, the relations between priestly interlocal cults and rulers outside the few great royal dynasties remains a point for further study. Detailed information on this point is available only for the extreme north⁹⁴ and for the Lake Bangweulu area.⁹⁵ It is perhaps significant that in both cases an inter-tribal priestly territorial cult was revealed, which maintained a relative independence from the local political leadership.

The no-man's land situation and the Tonga-Ila case: Vansinā has identified a factor that might be of primary significance for our understanding of the Central Zambian territorial cults. 'Kingdoms of the savanna' were not bureaucratically centralized, but each imposed upon an extended geographical area a network of ideological identification with the ruler, of tributed relationships, trade, emissaries and military operations which became less and less dense towards the periphery — so that between adjacent kingdoms large areas of relative no-man's land would remain.⁹⁶ In these marches, successful large kingdoms could only rise if the distance, both geographically and interactionally, to any already existing kingdom, was great enough (the case of Kazembe of the Lualaba),⁹⁷ or if any existing kingdom collapsed so that its place could be taken. In the centuries immediately preceding the colonial era most of Central Zambia, with extensions towards the northwest, south and north, exhibited this ambivalent state of affairs: being too far away to be firmly controlled by the great kingdoms (Lozi, Mwaat Yaav, Kazembe, Bemba, Undi, Mutapa, Rozwi), but lying too near to produce locally another kingdom of similar dimensions out of the exploits of a large number of immigrant minor rulers. The external check on these minor rulers' powers must have had repercussions upon their dealings with the territorial cult complex wherever it existed. While unable to expand maximally on the political plane, these rulers tended to adopt, or at least further develop, a religious consolidation (on the lines of a chiefly shrine cult), but they were never able to claim such ritual power over the land as did the great kings, particularly in the Bemba case. Brelsford's statement on the Bemba chiefs seems to be a more generally applicable: 'Association [between ruler and ecological powers] was only permanent when it was backed by political control of the land.'⁹⁸

Though illuminating, the notion of the relative no-man's land is

insufficient to explain the complex case of territorial cults, chieftainship and absence of Luba-ization among the Ila and Tonga. One element in our predicament here is the almost complete lack of data on the western Tonga groups that have of old belonged to the Lozi kingdom. Another element is the nature of the writings of the main student of Tonga society, Elisabeth Colson, whose ahistorical emphasis on contemporary social structure has so far failed to present a convincing picture of Tonga chieftainship — beyond the hardly substantiated assertion that in the past the Tonga had no chiefs.⁹⁹ A thorough historical study of Tonga society is urgently needed. In view of the large amount of research into Tonga history currently being undertaken by a number of scholars, it can be expected that before long we shall be able to base a discussion of pre-colonial Tonga history on sound data. Meanwhile we have to limit ourselves to speculation based on very fragmentary evidence.

In the last century Tonga society was decimated and brought to political collapse by the effects of Ndebele and Kololo raids, which even seem to have wiped out much of the oral tradition of the area. Absence of Tonga rulers at this stage would not prove anything as to previous periods. But is it at all true that Tonga rulers did not exist in the nineteenth century? The evidence of David Livingstone on Monze and other Tonga (or Toka) chiefs,¹⁰⁰ the impressive funerary customs reserved for those whom early twentieth-century writers chose to call chiefs,¹⁰¹ and the fact that Tonga use the term 'chief' for many of the land spirits associated with their territorial shrines¹⁰² strongly suggests that Colson's contention of Tonga chieftainship as a colonial creation is untenable. She herself reports, for the Upper River Tonga, modern chiefly families that are known by the ancient term of 'bana kokalia' ('nobles' or 'people of the shrine') — which could hardly be a colonial innovation.¹⁰³

Tonga colonial chieftainship appears therefore a restoration and partial re-interpretation of a much earlier pattern. That yet the Tonga as described by Colson display a normative system that, with its emphasis on diffuse leadership and achieved status, seems particularly appropriate for a chief-less society need not surprise us. Rather than assuming that this normative system is of entirely modern origin (which Colson does not suggest), we could link it meaningfully to a particular type of historical political system: one where the ruler, though exercising political functions, is considered a *primus inter pares*; not ritually separated from his subjects, and recruited not according to fixed kinship rules (which could safeguard the political monopoly of a particular lineage, clan or estate) but instead is collec-

tively chosen from a rather large pool of candidates. This is exactly the kind of political leadership described for the neighbouring Ila,¹⁰⁴ who are very similar to the Tonga in language, economy, and general cultural orientation, including religion. The presumably recent difference in political organization between Ila and Tonga seems then mainly due to differences in local experiences and response of a basically similar political system during the upheaval in the nineteenth century.

I shall now explore the implications of such a view for the theme of this section: the confrontation between immigrant rulers and territorial cults in the process of Luba expansion. Luba-ization did not successfully penetrate into the Tonga-Ila area. The chieftaincies in southern Zambia have no recorded tradition of immigration from the north and also lack the material attributes (ceremonial ironware: gongs, axes, bow-stands) generally associated with northern chiefly origins.¹⁰⁵ The particular type of chieftainship postulated here for the entire Tonga-Ila group was very different from the Luba political culture, since it denied the ruler a socially and ritually exalted position. Moreover, among the Ila and the Tonga interlocal territorial cults under priestly control have been very prominent and have fulfilled major functions of social control and interlocal interaction; we have identified these functions as an alternative to well-developed chieftainship along Luba lines. While southern Zambia has been overtaken by most other parts of the territory as far as material culture is concerned (pottery, iron technology),¹⁰⁶ it has a relatively high agricultural potential.¹⁰⁷ The area has remained occupied by the same civilization since the beginning of the present millennium.¹⁰⁸ It was the first part of Zambia to develop long-distance trade¹⁰⁹ — and this trade, not monopolized by chiefs as was the case in other parts of Zambia, was of remarkable dimensions even in the turbulent nineteenth century.¹¹⁰

The obvious question is: what kept the northern immigrants out of this attractive area? Distance cannot have been a factor, since some effectively Luba-ized parts of Zambia, such as the lands of the Nkoya, Lenje and Soli, are hardly less distant from the Northern homelands. In fact, one Luba ruler managed to establish himself at the southern periphery of the area: Mukuni of the Leya, east of Livingstone.¹¹¹ Doubtless there have been many other immigrant groups, but they were either assimilated without retaining their own identity, let alone assuming hereditary ruler status,¹¹² or they were violently repelled, as tradition has it for one branch of the Kaonde venturing south of the Kafue.¹¹³

Traditions surrounding the origins of the major land spirits of the

Ila may give us the key to an answer.¹¹⁴ Among the Ila each chief's area has its sacred grove where a major land spirit is venerated. There is some hierarchy to these major land spirits: those at the bottom being only venerated in one particular area, whereas those at the very top of the scale (Shimunenga, Munyama and especially Malumbe) are each venerated in the groves of a number of neighbouring areas. In fact, the three spirits named here are the main powers in the Ila pantheon after the High God and the Earth Spirit, Bulongo. Tradition presents these three land spirits as historical human beings who arrived in Ilaland as great chiefs and magicians. Munyama is explicitly remembered as leading a Lunda expedition into the area, whereas Malumbe is said to have come from the far east. Although these immigrant rulers may have made some impact on the Ila political structure (Smith and Dale¹¹⁵ suggest that the areas they conquered coincide with the areas in which they are now venerated), they were not able to found chiefly dynasties alien to the flexible, open and non-ascriptive nature of Ila chieftainship. In other words, though impressive enough in their time, they failed to Luba-ize the Ila but instead were Ila-ized: they were accommodated within the already existing politico-religious structure which encapsulated them and turned them into major local divinities. Here we find the exact opposite of what happened in the Bemba case; among the Ila the struggle between, on the one hand, the immigrant rulers and, on the other, the priests in association with non-ascriptive rulers without religious connotations, ended in an absolute victory on the homestead. The immigrants were redefined in a way that was harmless for the earlier political system and that could only boost the earlier religious system. The ironical fate of the immigrant chiefs in Ilaland is rather reminiscent of the fate of the agents of formal Islam who have spread over rural North Africa since the twelfth century: gone out to propagate the true Islamic doctrine (cf. the Luba political culture) they rapidly became encapsulated in the earlier rural religious system and ended up as local saints, the very cornerstones of the popular religion which they had tried to alter.¹¹⁶

Thus one is brought to assume that northern rulers, so successful in most of Zambia, failed to establish themselves in the southern part largely because the political and religious organization of some Ila-Tonga groups before the nineteenth century was in certain aspects superior to, and had a greater survival power than, that found elsewhere in the territory. With our present data it can only be speculated what these superior aspects were: a more developed yet flexible system of non-ascriptive secular rulers, supported not only by small-scale warfare (which may have been general throughout pre-Lunda Zambia)

but also by long-distance trade and by the specific nature of a cattle economy (which offers the unique possibility of accumulating wealth in a subsistence economy), and a balanced relationship between these rulers and an interlocal territorial cult system that, while providing additional political integration and arbitration, was perhaps more highly developed than anywhere else in Zambia because of the uncommonly unpredictable nature of the southern Zambian climate.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

I have suggested that the Luba-Lunda revolution represents one major theme in the historical study of territorial cults in Zambia. Certainly another such theme concerns the changes territorial cults have undergone in the general process of rapid social change that has characterized Central Africa since the first half of the last century; this theme I have pursued elsewhere.¹¹⁸

The main purpose of this essay has been to develop a number of hypotheses, which, though as yet untested, seem to meet the fragmentary and shallow factual data that we have on the sociology and history of the territorial cult in Zambia, and to collate these hypotheses tentatively into a plausible but conjectural historical process. It could be argued that a similar methodology is followed in most, if not all, sociological and historical interpretation; however, in the present case the imbalance between speculation and data is exceptionally great.

The only justification I can offer derives from an observation which I believe I share with many of my colleagues in the field of African sociology and history. Generally there is no dearth of empirical data, and more is being collected by African universities and international research institutions, normally with the warm support of African Governments. In view of the enormous expansion of our historical knowledge of Central Africa during the last fifteen years I am confident that within a few years the major factual gaps in this study of the territorial cult in Zambia can be filled. However, in order to achieve this it is absolutely necessary that we formulate our research priorities, in the form of testable hypotheses which clearly bring out what we presently take to be crucial aspects of our subject matter, and which can be substantiated or refuted in the light of subsequent data collection precisely guided by these hypotheses. The point is that, against the abundance of data, there is a lack of sophisticated interpretative hypotheses in much of the study of African society and history.

I believe that a greater insight into the history and sociology of the territorial cult in Zambia can be gained by further testing, expansion

or refutation of the main hypotheses employed in the present study: the hypothesis of the shrine cult as a systematic, formal complement to the process of everyday ecological transformations in societies with a subsistence economy; the hypothesis of pre-Luba Zambian societies as composed of feuding clan segments with little-developed secular leadership, and with priestly territorial cults maintaining a minimum of interlocal social and political order; and finally, the hypothesis of Luba and Lunda expansion as, among other aspects, a struggle for legitimacy and power between immigrating chiefs and pre-existing priestly cults — the latter-day varieties of the Zambian shrine cults being interpretable as the differential outcome of this struggle.

NOTES

¹ The material for this essay is derived from the following sources: (a) most available written material relevant to territorial cults in Zambia, with special emphasis on academic publications and with virtual neglect of two important categories of data: archival sources, and early accounts from European travellers and missionaries; (b) my own research in progress into various forms of religion in contemporary Zambia, and into urban-rural relationships among the Nkoya. I am indebted to the University of Zambia for a generous research grant, and to the following individuals: D.G. Jongmans for instigating and supervising my earlier research into the territorial cult in north-western Tunisia, which has strongly influenced me in writing the present essay; H.E. van Rijn for sharing the Zambian research with me; J. van Velsen for frequent advice and inspiration; P.A. Mutesi and D.K. Shiyore for competent research assistance; J.M. Schoffeleers for his invitation to write the present essay; T.O. Ranger, J.K. Rennie, J.M. Schoffeleers, J. van Velsen, R.P. Werbner and M. Wright for criticism of earlier drafts; and R.S. Roberts for final editorial efforts.

² J.M. Schoffeleers, 'Attempt at a Synthesis of the Material on Territorial Cults' (Lusaka, Univ. of Zambia, Oral Presentation, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972).

³ E.W. Smith and A.M. Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, Macmillan, 2 vols, 1920), II, 140ff.; K. Schlosser, *Propheten in Africa* (Braunschweig, A. Limbach, 1949), 29ff., 44f.; E. Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1960), 165; *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1962), 84-5; 'Spirit possession among the Tonga of Zambia', in J. Beattie and J. Middleton (eds), *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 69-103, esp. 77; *Social Consequences of Resettlement* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Institute for Social Research, 1971), 226-7; I.G. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula* (Livingstone, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Communication No. 5, 1950), 31; J. Torrend, 'A mysterious visitor to Batongaland', *The Zambesi Mission Record* (1906-9), 3, iii, 548-9; C.M. Doke, *The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia* (London, B.B. Harrup, 1931), 230-1. For a Malawian parallel of the prophetic alternative to shrine cults see below, J.M. Schoffeleers, 'The Chisumphu and Mbona Cults in Malawi: A comparative history', 147ff.

⁴ For a summary of the relevant literature on Zambian non-communal rain-calling specialists see B. Reynolds, *Magic, Divination and Witchcraft among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia* (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1963), 128-9.

⁵ C.M.N. White, *An Outline of Luvale Social and Political Organisation* (Lusaka, Rhodes-Living-

stone Paper No. 30, 1960), 46; V. Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1957), 319-20.

⁶ Typical examples are found in B. Stefaniszyn, *Social and Ritual Life of the Ambo of Northern Rhodesia* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), 155-6; W.V. Brelsford, *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamp* (Livingstone, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 12, 1946), 135; Doke, *The Lambas*, 239-40.

⁷ J. Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison, Wisconsin Univ. Press, 1966), 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 30-1.

⁹ A.I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), 356-7.

¹⁰ Richards's identification of the normal dwelling hut as just another type of shrine is quite justified and equally applies to Zambian peoples other than the Bemba; see Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 53. For the purpose of analysis in this essay, however, I shall concentrate on those shrines that do not primarily serve such a clearly utilitarian purpose as a house does.

¹¹ An account of the periodical erection of temporary 'shade huts' at permanent sacred spots is given by Stefaniszyn, *Social and Ritual Life of the Ambo*, 155-6.

¹² Turner, *Schism and Continuity*, 119, 126ff.; M. McCulloch, *The Southern Lunda and Related Peoples* (London, International African Institute, 1951), 72-3; White, *An Outline of Luvale . . . Organisation*, 12.

¹³ See L. Declé, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (New York, M.F. Mansfield, 1898), 239, for a Mambire example.

¹⁴ See F. Melland, *In Witchbound Africa* (London, Cass, 1923), 138, for a Kaonde example.

¹⁵ See *Ibid.*, 133, for a Kaonde example; Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, I, 162, for an Ila example; my field notes contain Nkoya examples.

¹⁶ I shall not dwell here upon the subject of spirit provinces: the division of the landscape into areas where each area is supposed to be associated with a particular spirit, the spirits being arranged in some hierarchical relationship with one another. For Zambia, the subject is properly documented only for the Mambwe; see below, D. Werner, 'Miao spirit shrines of the Southern Lake Tanganyika Region: The case of Kapembwa', 89ff. There are some indications of similar notions in the accounts of the Tonga shrine cults (see Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 187-8; *The Plateau Tonga, passim*; and T. Scudder, *The Ecology of the Gwembe Tonga* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1962), 111-12; on the other hand we can assume that Garbett's description of spirit provinces among the Korekore south of the Zambezi also applies to the Zambian Korekore (Goba), about whose religion very little is known; see G. Kingsley Garbett, 'Religious aspects of political succession among the Valley Korekore' in E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds), *The Zambesian Past* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1966), 137-70; and 'Spirit mediums as mediators in Korekore society' in Beattie and Middleton, *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*, 104-27; A. Mvula, 'Exclusive report from our tense southern border', *Sunday Times of Zambia*, 15 Apr. 1973. However, in view of my discussion of shrines, ecology and landscape, more information of a spiritual partition of the landscape would be extremely valuable.

¹⁷ cf. W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'The dynamics of religious change in western Zambia', *Ufahamu* (1975-6), 6, iii, 69-87; 'Ritual, class and urban-rural relations: Elements for a Zambian case-study', *Cultures et Développement* (1976), 8, 195-218; 'Regional and non-regional cults of affliction in Western Zambia', in R.P. Werbner (ed.), *Regional Cults* (London, Academic Press, A.S.A. Monograph 16, 1977), 141-75.

¹⁸ They are reported to be absent among the Ila, Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, I, 139.

¹⁹ Or, under modern conditions, where he identifies himself as a member of the village when, born in town, he visits his village home for the first time.

²⁰ Turner, *Schism and Continuity*, 292-3, and *The Drums of Affliction* (Oxford, Clarendon Press,

1968), 52ff.; C.M.N. White, 'Stratification and modern changes in an ancestral cult', *Africa* (1949), 19, 324-31, and *Elements in Luvale Beliefs and Rituals* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 32, 1961), 46-7; my field notes contain Nkoya examples.

²¹ See W.V. Brelsford, 'Rituals and medicines of the Chisinga iron-workers', *Man* (1949), 49, 27-9, for Chisinga ironworkers; C.M.N. White, 'Hunting and fishing in Luvale Society', *African Studies* (1956), 15, 75-86 for Luvale fishing and hunting, and *A Preliminary Survey of Luvale Rural Economy* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 29, 1959), 14, for Luvale honey-collectors; Doko, *The Lambas*, 242-3, for Lamba hunters and dancers; my field notes contain Nkoya hunter examples.

²² I.G. Gunnison, *The Luapula Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1959), 220-1; J. Slaski, 'Peoples of the lower Luapula Valley', in W. Whiteley, *The Bemba and Related Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, International African Institute, 1950), 93; D. Werner, 'Some developments in Bemba religious history', *Journal of Religion in Africa* (1971), 4, 1-2, and 'Miao spirit shrines'; Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, 358; L. Oger, 'Spirit Possession among the Bemba: A Linguistic Approach' (Lusaka, Univ. of Zambia, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972).

²³ Stefaniszyn, *Social and Ritual Life of the Ambo*, 156-7; Doko, *The Lambas*, 242-3.

²⁴ The term 'culture hero' could be used for named, anthropomorphic ahistorical beings who are considered to have introduced the local culture or an important element of it; e.g., Mulenga, who first domesticated animals, and Kapinda, the first hunter, among the Bemba (see Oger, 'Spirit Possession among the Bemba'), and Kanyanyu Mangaba among the Tumbuka (see Univ. of Zambia, Library, Lusaka, J. Banda, 'The History of Tumbuka-Speaking People of Lundazi District', n.d.).

²⁵ The High God can be defined as an invisible entity, postulated by the members of a society, and to whom they attribute the following characteristics: he is thought of as a person; he is the only member of a unique class of invisible entities; he may be considered the ultimate creator; he tends to be associated with the sky and with meteorological phenomena.

²⁶ See W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Possession and Mediumship in Zambia: Towards a Comparative Approach' (Lusaka, Univ. of Zambia, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972); and 'The dynamics of religious change'; M. Carter, 'Origin and Diffusion of Central African Cults of Affliction' (Lusaka, Univ. of Zambia, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972), and references cited in these papers.

²⁷ Melland, *In Witchbound Africa*, 155-6. Melland emphasizes that the rain ritual is the only occasion in Kaonde religion known to him where ritual is directed to the High God. It is possible that what he takes to be 'traditional' is in fact a recent innovation, particularly an aspect of the prophetic movement of Mupumani which reached the Kaonde at about the same time that Melland became their administrator; cf. van Binsbergen, 'The dynamics of religious change', and references cited therein.

²⁸ M. Mainga, 'A history of Lozi religion to the end of the nineteenth century; in T.O. Ranger and I. Kimambo (eds), *The Historical Study of African Religion* (London, Heinemann, 1972), 96.

²⁹ See H.W. Langworthy, 'Conflict among rulers in the history of Undi's Chewa Kingdom', *Trans-african Journal of History* (1971), 1, i, 1-23, and *Zambia before 1890: Aspects of Pre-Colonial History* (London, Longman, 1972), 30, 34, 55; Schoffeleers, 'The Chisumphu and Mbona Cults'.

³⁰ However, among the Luvale the 'clan formula' used in the village shrine ritual reinforces identification (though not effective interaction) with widely dispersed clan members on the interlocal level; see White, *An Outline of Luvale ... Organisation*, 12.

³¹ See below, Werner, 'Miao spirit shrines', for Kapembwa; Brelsford, *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamp*, 136-7, for Ikoma pool; Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 166, 187, for examples from southern Zambia.

³² Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 61-2, 163-4, 20ff.; Scudder, *The Ecology of the Gwembe Tonga*, 112-3 and *passim*.

³³ See van Binsbergen, 'Possession and Mediumship in Zambia'.

³⁴ See J.P. Bruwer, 'Remnants of a rain cult among the Acewa', *African Studies* (1952), 11, 179-82, for the *Chauta* institution among the Chewa; Werner, 'Miao spirit shrines', and Declé, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, 293-4, on the Mambwe; A.I. Richards, 'The Bemba of North-Eastern Rhodesia', in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds), *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (London, Oxford Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1951), 185; *Land, Labour and Diet*, 358ff., and W.V. Brelsford, *Aspects of Bemba Chieftainship* (Livingstone, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Communication No. 2, 1944), 28-9, on female custodians of the Bemba royal relic shrines; and Oger, 'Spirit Possession among the Bemba', on *ngulu* wives.

³⁵ The religion of north-western Zambia is exceptionally thoroughly researched (see for example, Turner, *Schism and Continuity; The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell Univ. Press, 1967); and *The Drums of Affliction*; White, *Elements in Luvale Beliefs*; McCulloch, *The Southern Lunda*, 72-83 and references cited therein; Melland, *In Witchbound Africa*, 127-236), but no evidence of a priestly interlocal shrine cult has been reported.

³⁶ See Turner, *Schism and Continuity*, 25ff. and *Forest of Symbols*, 280-98, for the Southern Lunda; Melland, *In Witchbound Africa*, 91, 96, 229ff., 243, 256ff., for the Kaonde; Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, 344-5, for the Bemba; my field notes contain Nkoya examples.

³⁷ It could be suggested that my tentative interpretation here is just a lapse back into the old 'explanations' of magic and religion such as offered by Frazer, Lang and Freud. I doubt whether this is the case. The interpretation of religion faces at least two major problems: first, the recognition of some correspondence between certain religious and non-religious phenomena, and secondly (once the general idea of such correspondence is agreed upon), the detailed explanation of this correspondence which, among other aspects, involves the attempt to account for the selection, in a given society, of particular religious forms to correspond with particular non-religious aspects. The recognition of some correspondence between religious and non-religious aspects has been one of the main achievements of the nineteenth-century studies of such authors as Feuerbach, Marx, Fustel de Coulanges and Durkheim. It is the second problem that dominates modern religious studies. Here it becomes necessary to examine and contrast the formal structures of corresponding religious and non-religious forms in an attempt to discover a systematic and generalizable approach which will take us beyond the psychologism and *ad hoc* interpretations based on one society only, to which so many pioneers in this field have fallen victim.

My attempt is along these lines. It does not stop at trivial claim of some correspondence between everyday 'ecological' activities and 'ecological' shrine ritual, but tries to point out the underlying specific correspondence between the constituent formal properties of these two socio-cultural systems.

³⁸ See G. Kay, *A Social Geography of Zambia* (London, Univ. of London Press, 1967), 21-2.

³⁹ As denounced by early sociologists such as E. Durkheim, *Les Regles de la methode sociologique* (Paris, Alcan, 1897), and P. Sorokin, *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (New York, Harper, 1928).

⁴⁰ See Colson, *The Plateau Tonga*, 92-3, 217, for a discussion of the Tonga village founder raised to the status of land spirit,

⁴¹ In other words, she fails to give attention to the second interpretational problem as outlined, above, n.37.

⁴² For a study of the communal functions of the shelter, particularly in defining the village as an effective though rapidly changing group, see W. Watson, 'The Kaonde village', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* (1954), 15, 1-29, based on research by Watson and Van Velsen among the Kaonde.

⁴³ This is the general situation in north-western Zambia. See Turner, *Schism and Continuity*, especially Map 4, for the Lunda; W.R. Mwendela, *Mukanda and Makishi: Traditional Education in Northwestern Zambia* (Lusaka, Neczam, 1972), 34-5, for the Luvale; my field notes contain Nkoya examples.

⁴⁴ Among the Nkoya the erection of a new village shrine is the first task when making a new village.

⁴⁵ See Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 98.

⁴⁶ For example, the ruling Kazembe in 1914 removed the royal cult from Lunde, where the first Kazembe was buried, to his capital, by making replicas of the old graves (even of those of the Mwaat Yaavs) and planting new trees on them, I.G. Cunnison (ed.), *Historical Traditions of the Eastern Lunda* (Lusaka, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Communication No. 23, 1961), 112.

⁴⁷ See, for example, the Eastern Lunda's destruction of the Aushi national shrine Makumba, below, n.93; the Ngoni's destruction of rain shrines, J. McCracken, 'The nineteenth century in Malawi'; T.O. Ranger, 'The nineteenth century in Southern Rhodesia'; J. McCracken, 'African politics in twentieth century Malawi', in T.O. Ranger (ed.), *Aspects of Central African History* (London, Heinemann, 1968), 103, 121, 196.

⁴⁸ J.M. Schoffeleers, 'The history and political role of the M'Bona cult among the Mang'anja', in Ranger and Kimambo, *Historical Study*, 73-94, and 'The Chisumphi and Mbona Cults'; G.G.K. Gwassa, 'Kinjikiule and the ideology of Maji Maji', in Ranger and Kimambo, *Historical Study*, 202-17; cf. Ranger and Kimambo, 'Introduction', *ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴⁹ I.G. Cunnison, *History on the Luapula* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 21, 1951), 24, related the following Luapula tradition on the 'pygmies' preceding the Bantu population around Lake Mweru: 'They are believed to have been of the same Clan as Kaponto, the man who invaded the island (Kilwa). There are believed to have been two survivors . . . who made Kaponto promise to keep up the modes of prayer to ancestors, of rain ritual, and of the Butwa society which was peculiar to the pygmies' (my italics). For hypotheses concerning the role of Batwa shrine cults, see I. Linden, 'The Shrine of the Karongas at Mankhamba' (Lusaka, Univ. of Zambia, Conference on the History of Central African Religious Systems, 1972).

⁵⁰ J.D. Clarke, 'A note on the pre-Bantu inhabitants of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland', *Northern Rhodesian Journal* (1950), 1, ii, 42-52; B.M. Fagan and D.W. Phillipson, 'Sebanzi: The Iron Age sequence at Lochinvar, and the Tonga', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (1965), 95, 253-94.

⁵¹ C.M.N. White, 'The ethno-history of the upper Zambezi', *African Studies* (1962), 21, 10-27, and *An Outline of Luwale . . . Organisation*, 46; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, *passim*; W. Watson, *Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1959), 12-13; Cunnison, *Kinship on the Luapula*, 7-8, 12, and *History on the Luapula*, 23-4.

⁵² See for example, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1940); M. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1945); M. Fortes, 'The structure of unilineal descent groups', *American Anthropologist* (1953), 55, 17-41; A. Southall, *Alur Society* (Cambridge, W. Heffer, 1956); J. Middleton and D. Tait (eds), *Tribes without Rulers* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).

⁵³ B.L. Peters, 'Some structural aspects of the feud among the camel-herding Bedouin of Cyrenaica', *Africa* (1967), 31, 261-82.

⁵⁴ J. Barnes, 'African models in the New Guinea Highlands', *Man* (1962), 62, 5-9.

⁵⁵ M. Gluckman, 'Introduction', in J.C. Mitchell and J.A. Barnes, *The Lamba Village* (Cape Town, Cape Town Univ. Press, Communication from the School of African Studies, New Series No. 24, 1950), 1-20.

⁵⁶ Colson, *The Plateau Tonga*, 102-3; Turner, *Schism and Continuity*; J. van Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1964).

⁵⁷ E. Gellner, 'Saints of the Atlas', in J.A. Pitt-Rivers (ed.), *Mediterranean Countrymen* (The Hague, Mouton, 1963), 145-57, and *Saints of the Atlas* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969); W.M.J. van Binsbergen, 'Religie en Samenleving: Een Studie over het Bergland van N.W. Tunesie' (Univ. of Amsterdam, unpubl. Drs of Soc. Sc. thesis, 1971); 'Religion and Regional Integration in the Highlands of N.W. Tunisia 1850-1970' (Nairobi, East African Universities Social Sciences Council Conference, 1971; a revised version will appear in *Middle Eastern Studies* in 1978); see also my cri-

tique of Gellner's *Saints of the Atlas* in *Cahiers des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Revue du Centre des Traditions et des Arts Populaires* (1971), 4, 203-11.

⁵⁸ Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, II, 186-7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 164, 166. On a more limited scale the institution has continued to exist: the payment of a chicken or goat by the person divined as having caused the wrath of the spirits of the shrine.

⁶¹ Colson, *The Plateau Tonga*, 113, where it is mentioned as one of several factors giving high status to a local leader.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, cf. 218.

⁶⁴ Garbett, 'Religious aspects of political succession', 137-70, and 'Spirit mediums as mediators', 104-27.

⁶⁵ E. Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1912), *passim*.

⁶⁶ Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 82-3.

⁶⁷ See C.M.N. White, 'The Balovale peoples and their historical background', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* (1949), 8, 26-41; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 85-6, especially in relation to north-western Zambia and adjacent areas.

⁶⁸ A.D. Roberts, *A History of the Bemba* (London, Longman, 1973), 38-93; Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization*, 11-12; and *The Luapula Peoples*, 30ff., 147ff.; these refer to north-eastern Zambia, where the growth of Luba and Lunda kinship in the eighteenth century formed the culmination of a process of gradual immigration and political development that had been going on for several centuries.

⁶⁹ Probably the construction of the high tower, as recorded in many other myths from the Bemba and neighbouring peoples in Central Africa; see Roberts, *A History of the Bemba*, 30ff., 147ff.

⁷⁰ A. Tweedie, 'Towards a history of the Bemba from oral tradition', in Stokes and Brown, *The Zambesian Past*, 204 (my italics). The passage on cleaning the shrines is not included in Roberts's synthetic account (*A History of the Bemba*, 40) of Bemba myths of origin.

⁷¹ See for example, Roberts, *History of the Bemba*, 346ff., for Lucheles references.

⁷² Brelsford, *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamp*, 130-1; Werner, 'Miao spirit shrines'; Cunnison, *The Luapula Peoples*, 218ff.

⁷³ For Lucheles see references in Roberts, *History of the Bemba*, 346; for the theme of hitting the tree, see Univ. of Zambia, Library, B. Chimba, 'A History of the Baushi of Zambia', n.d.; J.C. Chikwale, *Royal Praises and Praise Names of the Lunda Kazembe of Northern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, Rhodes-Livingstone Inst., Communication No. 25, 1962), 50. Even what is claimed to be the most important (tree) shrine of the Ila has a spear-head embedded in its bark, 'remarkable trees in Zambia', *Orbit* (1973), 2, i, 10-11, although, as we shall see in a later section, Luba-ization of the Ila has not been successful.

⁷⁴ Werner, 'Some developments in Bemba religious history'.

⁷⁵ See Richards, 'The Bemba', and *Land, Labour and Diet*, 359-60.

⁷⁶ Roberts, *A History of the Bemba*, 69-71.

⁷⁷ Werner, 'Some developments in Bemba religious history', 14-15; see Oger, 'Spirit Possession among the Bemba', for a similar view.

⁷⁸ Oger, 'Spirit Possession among the Bemba'; Werner, 'Some developments in Bemba religious

history; Slaski, 'Peoples of the lower Luapula Valley', 93; Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, 358, and 'The Bemba'; Whiteley, *The Bemba*, 30.

⁷⁹ R.J. Apthorpe, 'Mythical African political structures, Northern Rhodesia', in A. Dubb (ed.), *Myth in Modern Africa* (Lusaka, Rhodes-Livingstone Inst., The Fourteenth Conference Proceedings, 1960), 18-37.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸¹ R.J. Apthorpe, 'Northern Rhodesia: Clanship, chieftainship, and Nsenga political adaptation', in Apthorpe, *From Tribal Rule to Modern Government* (Lusaka, Rhodes-Livingstone Inst., The Thirteenth Conference Proceedings, 1959), 69-98.

⁸² Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet*, 358, and, especially, Oger, personal communication, 5 Sept. 1972; Fr Oger has written a paper in Bemba on this and related subjects, which unfortunately was not available for the present study.

⁸³ W.V. Brelsford, 'Shimwalule: A study of a Bemba chief and priest', *African Studies* (1942), 1, 2ff., 15, 21; *Aspects of Bemba Chieftainship*; Oger, personal communication.

⁸⁴ Mainga, 'A History of Lozi religion', 96-7; G.C. Clay, *History of the Mankoya District* (Livingstone, Rhodes-Livingstone Inst., Communication No. 4, 1946), 3; my field notes on Luchazi history.

⁸⁵ See the prominence of the royal bracelet in early Lunda traditions in I.G. Cunnison, *Historical Traditions of the Eastern Lunda* (Lusaka, Rhodes-Livingstone Inst., Communication No. 23, 1961), 2, 6-7.

⁸⁶ It is attractive to view *Mukanda* (boys' puberty ritual), a central religious institution among Luwale, Luchazi, Chokwe, Mbunda and Southern Lunda, as an alternative to the priestly interlocal shrine cult: see White, *Elements in Luwale Beliefs*, 1-27; McCulloch, *The Southern Lunda*, 85ff.; Mwondela, *Mukanda and Makishi, passim*; M. Gluckman, 'The role of the sexes in *Wiko* circumcision ceremonies', in M. Fortes (ed.), *Social Structure* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1949), 145-67; Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 151-279. *Mukanda* certainly provides interlocal communications, sometimes over hundreds of kilometres, and ceremonial specialization which might take on political functions comparable to those of the interlocal priestly shrine cults; see C.M.N. White, 'Factors in the social organisation of the Luwale', *African Studies* (1959), 14, 97-112, and *Elements in Luwale Beliefs*, 1-2. The idea of *Mukanda* forming an alternative to the territorial cult is further corroborated by Colson's data on Tonga immigrants: while in the past immigrants to Tongaland had always organically been assimilated into Tonga society — including adoption of Tonga ritual — Luwale immigrants who have penetrated the area since the early decades of this century remained in separate villages and, far from adopting Tonga interlocal territorial cults, continued to send their boys to *Mukanda* initiation camps in the west, E. Colson, 'The assimilation of aliens among Zambian Tonga', in R. Cohen and J. Middleton (eds), *From Tribe to Nation in Africa*, (Scranton, Chandler, 1970), 35-54, esp. 38. *Mukanda*, not unlike *nyau* in eastern Central Africa, seems to represent an even older stage than the priestly territorial cult, and to be associated with a hunting and gathering economy rather than with a more developed agriculture or husbandry; see White, 'The Balovale peoples', 30. Much more research is needed before the place of the *Mukanda* complex in Central African religious history can be determined. Recent research by R. Papstein (for his doctoral thesis at the University of California, Los Angeles) is likely to throw further light on the religious history of N.W. Zambia, and particularly on the relationship between immigrant chiefs, chiefly shrine cults, and *Mukanda*.

⁸⁷ White, 'The Balovale peoples', 30, 33-4, and *An Outline of Luwale . . . Organisation*, 46, approvingly summarized in Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 85-6.

⁸⁸ See A.I. Richards, 'Keeping the king divine', *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute for 1968* (1969), 23-5; *Land, Labour and Diet*, 359-60; and 'The Bemba'; Brelsford, *Aspects of Bemba Chieftainship*, especially 37-8.

⁸⁹ Brelsford, 'Shimwalule', and *Aspects of Bemba Chieftainship*, 2-3.

⁹⁰ Werner, 'Some developments in Bemba religious history'; Oger, 'Spirit Possession among the Bemba'.

⁹¹ M. Gluckman, 'The Lozi of Barotseland in North-Western Rhodesia', in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds), *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, 1-93, esp. 85; Mainga, 'A history of Lozi religion', 102ff.; V. Turner, *The Lozi Peoples of North-Western Rhodesia* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), 50; Langworthy, 'Conflict among rulers in the history of Undi's Chewa Kingdom', 1-23 esp. 9; I. Linden, 'The Shrine of Karongas', 28-9, 55-6, for the Undi Kingdom.

⁹² Cunnison, *The Luapula Peoples*, 217-18.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 219-20; Chimba, 'A History of the Baushi', 6-7; G. Kay, *Chief Kalaba's Village* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 35, 1964), 16; R. Philpott, 'Makumba — the Baushi tribal God', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (1936), 66, 189-208.

⁹⁴ Werner, 'Miao spirit shrines'.

⁹⁵ Brelsford, *Fishermen of the Bangweulu Swamp*, 136-7.

⁹⁶ Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 245-6.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Brelsford, *Aspects of Bemba Chieftainship*, 3.

⁹⁹ See Colson, *The Plateau Tonga*, 207; and the similar view in M.G. Billing, 'Northern Rhodesia: Government policy in the utilization of indigenous political systems', in Apthorpe, *From Tribal Rule to Modern Government*, 1-16.

¹⁰⁰ D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London, J. Murray, 1899), 363; I. Schapera (ed.), *Livingstone's Private Journals, 1851-53* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1960), 145-6, 207.

¹⁰¹ W.H. Anderson, *On the Trail of Livingstone* (California, Pacific Press, 1919).

¹⁰² J.L. Myers, 'A religious survey of the Batonga', *Proceedings of the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia, 1927* (Lovedale, S.A. Lovedale Institution Press, 1927), 127-32.

¹⁰³ Colson, *Social Organization of the Gwembe Tonga*, 167-8.

¹⁰⁴ Smith and Dale, II, 180-1; Jaspan, *The Ila-Tonga Peoples of North-Western Rhodesia* (London, International African Institute, 1953), 41; R.J. Fielder, 'Social Change among the Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia' (Manchester Univ., unpubl. M.A. thesis, 1965).

¹⁰⁵ B. Fagan, 'The Iron Age sequence in the Southern Province of Northern Rhodesia', *The Journal of African History* (1963), 4, 157-77, esp. 174ff.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; Fagan and Phillipson, 'Sebanzi: The Iron Age sequence', 274-5.

¹⁰⁷ D.J. Siddle, 'Land use and agricultural potential', in D.H. Davies (ed.), *Zambia in Maps* (London, Univ. of London Press, 1971), 76-7; D. Phillipson, 'The early iron age in Zambia: Regional variants and some tentative conclusions', *The Journal of African History* (1968), 9, 191-211.

¹⁰⁸ Fagan and Phillipson, 'Sebanzi: The Iron Age sequence'.

¹⁰⁹ Fagan, 'The Iron Age sequence'; *Iron Age Cultures in Zambia* (London, Chatto & Windus, 2 vols, 1967), II, 135-9, 142ff.; Fagan and Phillipson, 'Sebanzi: The Iron Age sequence'.

¹¹⁰ M.P. Miracle, 'Plateau Tonga entrepreneurs in historical interregional trade', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* (1959), 26, 34-50.

¹¹¹ Univ. of Zambia, Library, Chief Silocha Mukuni II; 'A Short History of the Baleya People of Kalomo District', n.d.; M. Muntamba, 'The political and ritual sovereignty among the Mukuni Leya of Zambia', *Zambia Museum Journal* (1970), 1, 28-39.

¹¹² Colson, 'The assimilation of aliens among the Zambian Tonga'. A highly interesting group for further research is the ethnic cluster of the 'Baluba', whom Smith and Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples*, I, xxvii, 25ff., 40, 123, 313, report as living at the periphery of the Ila and as Ila-speaking.

¹¹³ Melland, *In Witchbound Africa*, 29-30 The Kaonde are generally considered to be of Luba extraction

¹¹⁴ Smith and Dale *The Ila Speaking Peoples*, II, 180ff

¹¹⁵ *Ibid* 181-2

¹¹⁶ Van Binsbergen 'Religie en Samenleving' critique of Gellner's *Sants of the Atlas*, and 'Religion and Regional Integration', *passim*

¹¹⁷ D R Archer, 'Rainfall' in Davies, *Zambia in Maps*, 20-1 Archer summarizes the pattern of rainfall in Zambia. Towards the south there is a considerable decrease in average annual rainfall and a considerable increase in annual fluctuations in rainfall (i.e. greater uncertainty and unpredictability)

¹¹⁸ Binsbergen, 'The dynamics of religious change', 'Ritual, class and urban-rural relations', 'Regional and non regional cults of affliction', 'Religious innovation and political conflict in Zambia: A contribution to the interpretation of the Lumpa Rising', in W M J van Binsbergen and R. Buijtenhuijs (eds), *Religious Innovation in Modern African Society* (Leyden, Afrika-Studiecentrum, African Perspectives No. 1 of 1976), 101-35

Miao Spirit Shrines in The Religious History of The Southern Lake Tanganyika Region: The Case of Kapembwa¹

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Throughout the Southern Lake Tanganyika region² there are a number of recognized territorial spirit shrines which are located at various natural phenomena, including caves, mountains, large rocks and trees, and waterfalls, some of which are believed to be inhabited by pythons. Each shrine is identified with a particular territory, and the spirit of the shrine is believed to be responsible for the wealth of the land therein. While certain similarities exist between these shrines, there are important differences as well. Such differences involve the nature of the rituals performed at the shrines, the size of the territory which each shrine represents, and the degree of supernatural power which associated shrinal spirits are believed to control. It appears that these differences have developed historically as different societies have used the shrines to honour their spirits.

The current condition of shrines in this region supports this general view. In some cases the location of a shrine and the name of an associated spirit is remembered, but communal ceremonies are no longer conducted at the site. The large cave at the bottom of Kalambo Falls,³ for example, is said to have been the home of a python and the spirit Mbwilo. The current priest, however, is crippled and can no longer reach the shrine.⁴ Ceremonies there have gone into abeyance, which is why the Kalambo people believe that the python moved away. This shrine, and others in similar circumstances, have fallen into disuse. Possibly there are some which have been forgotten altogether.

Still, there are a large number of active shrines throughout the region which continue to receive the attention of local people. Either privately or communally, gifts are presented to an established shrine official who delivers them to the shrine and conducts prayers, calling on the spirits to assure the benevolence of the natural forces. Only one spirit is associated with each of these 'simple' shrines, although other spirits may be invoked during shrinal ceremonies. Priestships are usually hereditary and are sometimes held by headmen of villages near