



# Tracing the Origins of Wakiyoso of Kilimanjaro Using Agricultural and Postmortem Ritual Features

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this study was to have in-depth information from oral traditions, literature, and myths depicting the emergence of the Wakiyoso of Kilimanjaro using agricultural and post-mortem ritual features. The study employed a multi-variant methodology. It used a sample of 88 people who volunteered to participate. Criterion sampling was used, whereby the study involved only respondents who were senior by age, ranging from 50 to 100 years old, and had a good reputation in society. Qualitative data were collected. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focused group discussion, and observation and presented thematically using stories, anecdotes, legends, and myths. The findings depicted that the Wakiyoso were a collection of many origins, some from neighbouring ethnic groups and others coming from as far as the Horn of Africa, the Coast of East Africa, and Madagascar. The broad spectrum of blending makes this ethnic group have diverse physical features and some postmortem ritual differences. However, the rituals, as part of culture, are so dynamic that no one can decide who the proto-Wakiyoso were by themselves. More studies using new technology, such as DNA and whole genome sequencing (WGS), are needed to determine the sources of the first Wakiyoso stock in Kilimanjaro.*

**Keywords:** Chagga, Exhumation, Kilimanjaro, Postmortem rituals, Wakiyoso,

## How to cite this work (APA):

Mwacha, E., Kairembo, R. & Pallangyo, W. (2023). Tracing the Origins of Wakiyoso of Kilimanjaro Using Agricultural and Postmortem Ritual Features. *Journal of Research Innovation in Education*, 7(4), xxx – xxx. <https://doi.org/10.59765/njur3564>.

## 1. Introduction

Asking for origin is one of the ontological questions. Knowing one's origin will strengthen his or her identity. All humans are what history has made them. However, in some illiterate societies where history depends on oral traditions, little is known about their origins. The Chagga written history started with colonial writers, who also did not answer many questions about the origins of the ethnic groups in Tanzania. This study analyses fresh primary and secondary data to trace the origins of Wakiyoso, one of the Chagga subethnic groups at the feet of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Wakiyoso is a branch of the Chagga ethnic group with autonomy that shares a lot of characteristics with the sister groups such as Wauru, Waunjo, Wamashami, Washira, and Wamochi. Presently, the names Kyiwoso and Chagga are used interchangeably. They are also called Wachaga, Jagga, Dschagga, Waschagga, or Wachagga. They are the wealthiest and most highly organised agriculturalist Bantu-speaking people living on the fertile southern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa's highest mountain) in northern Tanzania. The Wa-Chagga, who constitute the third largest ethnic group in Tanzania, traditionally live on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru near Moshi (Singh Diva, 2014). The Sukuma Tribe is the first populous ethnic group in Tanzania, with an

approximate population of 13,199,773. Though their traditional home is Mwanza and Shinyanga, this ethnic group coexists with other ethnic groups in Geita and Simiyu. According to the 2022 census, Shinyanga has a population of 2241299, Simiyu has 2140497, Geita has 2977608, Mwanza has 3699872, and Sukuma lives as a minority in other areas across the country. The second-most populous ethnic group is the Nyamwezi, who live in Tabora as their homeland (33916779). But Nyamwezi are also found in other regions as minorities. However, Mwacha, (2013) warns that in the present Chagga phonology, there is neither 'g' nor 'gg' sound, which is why the Chagga people use words such as Chaka and Wachaka'.

The term 'Chagga' was supposedly aloof of any ethnic group identification and was eschewed until the 1950s, when the Chagga people united and had a central government or the Chagga council under the paramount leader, Mangi Mkuu Thomas Lenana Marialle. The term Mangi is used in the same sense for a king or emperor in the West. The ethnic groups, who were previously ashamed of this moniker because they believed it to be the colonial brand, accepted it as a collective brand while retaining their local chieftainship for the status quo. They saw their togetherness as a nationalistic trademark. (Fisher, 2012).

Wakiwoso is renowned for their irrigation systems of farrow networks (Tagseth, 2008) , elaborate post-mortem rituals, and sacred shrubs known as Masale (*Dracaena fragrans*) (Sheridan, 2008; Mwacha, 2013). They practiced the exhumation of human relics. Exhumation is removing the remains of a human body from the grave; the Wakiwoso do this after some years of burial. This study is an attempt to trace the origins of this subtribe by comparing the agricultural practices and the post-mortem rituals, which include exhumation.

## 2. Literature Review

Tracing the origin of Wakiwoso in its immediate context, someone finds it posing a social paradox because the traditions seem to show that Wakiwoso are a Chagga subgroup. However, the former being a multilingual ethnic group suggests external influence, including the possibility of having more than one ancestor. The earliest recorded Chagga history claimed to have identified more than twenty-two groups, each with its own dialect, but as confirmed by a study done by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the second half of the 1980s, there are six major dialects spoken in Chagga Land. These dialects are *Kyiurombo*, *Kyiuunjo*, *Kyimochi*, *Kyikiwoso*, *Kyimashami*, and *Kyishira* (Maanga, 2015). And *Vwarwa*, occupying Mount Meru, is closely linked to both *Kimashami* and *Kishira*. The concern here is whether each of these dialects

indicates different origins. Chagga history is silent on this issue.

Maanga (2015) is one of the historians who felt the necessity of re-writing the Chagga history after he had identified many shortcomings of the early and even modern recorders of the Chagga history. Exemplifying this problem, Maanga believed some non-African writers have misspelt and mispronounced most Chagga words, like some of the mispronounced words as far as the Chagga geographical history is concerned: *Morang'u* (mispronounced as Marangu), *Mashami* (mispronounced as Machame), *Shira* (mispronounced as Siha), *Kyiwoso* (mispronounced as Kibosho), *Orombo* (mispronounced as Horombo), and *Tuweta* (mispronounced as Taveta) (Maanga, 2015).

The similarities and differences between the subtribes depend, to some extent, on their origins. Before their federation in 1951, the Chagga had a sense of autonomy, meaning that every linguistic group had its own political system and a defined territory. The question is: why are they not treated as ethnic groups based on these linguistic differences since language is sometimes seen as one of the primary factors determining an ethnic group? The linguistic diversity is interesting, as writers on ethnicity place a high value on language. For instance, Fisher (2012) indicates that historians such as Ranger (1989) and Fabian (1983) focus on the function of missionaries in establishing linguistic norms precisely because they are seen as a crucial component of the construction of ethnic identities. Samuel Johnson once said that "languages are the pedigree of nations" (Quotes on Language, 1752). Languages may be triggered by the origin of the subtribe, affiliations within the subgroup, or geographical factors like natural features like rivers and forests, which could have separated the same people for a reasonable time. It is likely that there were other people on the mountain for hundreds of years before the Chagga arrived there.

Mojola (1998) asserts that the name *Wachagga* is of Swahili origin. He further indicates that Kilimanjaro people are called *Wakirima* by their neighbours, which means people from the mountain (*kirima*-mountain). Chaggaland is called *Waha* by the Kahe and Pare people. But these names are not to be found among the Chagga themselves. When referring to themselves, the Chagga people call themselves *Wandu wa mnden*, which means the people who live in the banana plantations (Mojola, 1998).

The above statement by Mojola is prone to severe criticism for two major reasons: firstly, to date, Kirima is the name of two areas (villages and wards) in Kibosho, namely Kirima Juu and Kirima Chini. The Swahili name for an uphill is called kilima, not kirima. Secondly, the name has never been used to refer to any living society in neither the region nor its neighbours, as far as Upare and Shambala,

save for the fact that it is used in the neighbouring country of Kenya for places in different provinces. Hence, the researchers were convinced that the name was introduced by the immigrants from the northern parts of Chaggaland, which is modern Kenya.

In Kenya, there are several places called Kirima, i.e., in Nakuru County there is Kirima Market, and in Naivasha also there is a market with the same name, Kirima Market'. One of the villages that make up Mbeere South Constituency in Kenya is Kirima, and there is a primary school named Kirima Primary School. Among the Chagga, there is no use of kirima for mountain; hence, kirima does not denote a mountain, as the word for an uphill is *uwanga*, or *wanga* in Kibosho. Mojola (1998) is not specific about the users of the name.

As said above, it is impossible to trace the origins of the people, independent of people's neighbourhood histories and rituals or traditions. The origins of rituals of burial with exhumation of human relics, suppose the ethnic group travels in the dessert? Or did they get shade from a tree? Did they settle on the mountain feet and get shelter there? Some experiences of the desert will be built into their ethnic myths and folktales, then streamed into some rituals. Did they face some dangerous animals, like pythons, and be spared? To observe behaviours in connection to the scenario and phenomena encountered, the totems and taboos would develop. And these observances and rituals are well illustrated in the Jewish rituals associated with Passover. They ate unleavened bread and ate while shoes were tied in their feet to remember the day they left Egypt with haste; they ate bitter herbs to remember the hardship of the slavery life (Exodus 12:1–11).

Finding the origins of rituals of burial and exhumation of human relics (RBEHR) among the Wakiwoso cannot be accomplished independently of the Wakiwoso's origin. At the same time, the origins of Wakiwoso cannot be traced or studied independently of other Chagga groups. Therefore, the history of Wakiwoso and their rituals should be attempted with reference to other neighbours' histories.

The Wa-Kyiwoso, or as used to be referred to as Wakiwoso, is only a fraction of the Chagga population, and touch only one part of it and touching the others must be done in diverse magnitudes. Unfortunately, among the Chagga chieftainships, the Wakiwoso and their *Mangi Sina* were ignored, not only in colonial history but even in postcolonial literature. This makes literature related to this ethnic group scant or missing in both political and religious fields. While other dialects such as *Kimochi*, *Kimashami*, and *Kiunjo* have been put in written form by early 20<sup>th</sup> century missionaries in hymnal books, portions of the Bible, and bible translations, to date no single piece of literature such as the Bible, hymnal books, or even flayers

have been written in *Kyikiwoso* dialect. And this is partly due to the Roman Catholic Church, which was not happy to see literature and worship in the vernacular. Only after Second Vatican council 11 October 1962 – 8 December 1965, the Bible was translated into Swahili. (Kilaini, n.d.). The entire list of bible or parts of the bible translated, from the Bible Society of Tanzania has no Wakiwoso Vernacular edition.

Fisher (2012) expresses his concern about this when he asserts that the rivals of *Mangi Sina*, namely, *Mangi Rindi* and *Marealle*, sought to downplay the significance of *Sina* to bolster their own political influence (Fisher, 2012). Lack of literature makes the history of this sub-ethnic group closed; therefore, it is hard or impossible to trace its historicity. However, as an ethnic group, Chagga are believed to have different origins, and because of that, they do not phonologically speak the same dialectal characteristics. These dialects are *Kyiurombo*, *Kyiunjo*, *Kyimochi*, *Kyikiwoso*, *Kyimashami*, and *Kyishira*. (Maanga, 2015).

### 3. Methodology

This study employed multivariate methods, including constructionist grounded theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 2006). As a qualitative study that aimed to present and analyse data thematically as to offer a descriptive information, semi-structured interviews were used, as they suited both ethnography and CGT. In addition to the aforementioned methods, documents and secondary data were simultaneously utilised. As ethno-historical nature of the study methods needed more myths, oral traditions, interpretations of taboos, and totems of the ethnic group, namely Wakiwoso, more promising respondents were needed. The study was conducted over four wards: Kibosho Mashariki, Kibosho Kati, Okaoni, and Kibosho Magharibi in Moshi District Council in the Kilimanjaro region. Because its population shares many cultural aspects, this place was picked for its homogeneous characteristics. The study involved 88 respondents who were selected using criteria of age and social credibility (good reputation). Males were 56 (63.6%), while females were 32 (36.4%). Age ranges were categorised as 50-65, which were 35 (39.8%), 66-75, which were 26 (29.5%), 76-95, which were 18 (20.5%), and 96-100, which were 9 (10.2%) [*Percentages are adjusted by the nearest tenth.*].

Prior to data collection, the sages who were to respond were identified. Then the identified potential respondents were systematically randomly chosen by taking every second. Twenty-two respondents from each ward were selected. The respondents were of good age, ranging from 50 to 100 years old. Therefore, using the CGT, the study could explore the population using scant literature (Winter, 2009). Using this multivariate methodology for the study

lacking in literature was thought to be more compensative than any other single method. In addition to interviews, observation methods were employed. The observation list and data collection instruments are the methods used by the study to store data, such as transcription, audio recording, tallying, image capture, and video recording. These instruments range from simple paperwork to digital and mechanical machines capable of recording and preserving the data. Charmaz (2006) speaks of the studies that study ethnic groups and the issue of data collection. To her, ethnography means recording the life of a particular group and thus entails sustained participation and observation in their milieu, community, or social world. It means more than participant observation alone because an ethnographic study covers the round of life occurring within the given milieu and often includes supplementary data from documents, diagrams, maps, photographs, and, occasionally, formal interviews and questionnaires. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 21). In observing crops, cultivation methods, farrow infrastructure, burial rituals, and sites. The information from observation helped in the interpretation of the data obtained.

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## 4. Results and Discussion

In this subsection, the study analyses data about the postulations of origins of Wakiywoso through agricultural and post-mortem features, namely rituals of burial and exhumation of human relics (RBEHR) and compares and contrasts them with the Wakiywoso of Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

### *Coastal Origin Postulation*

#### *Migrations and Agricultural features*

Some traditions relate the proto-Kiywoso with coastal exoduses, supposing their assumptions are supported by the manifestation of Arabic and coastal names. One of the grounded theory dicta is to be sensitive to what is going on around you. The study observed Islamic names such as *Salim*, whose son was Mohammed; these lived in the late 1800s. *Sefu* was alive until the 2000s; *Malekia* (etymologically Arab Malik meaning king); *Hamisi Lewando* (*Lwendo?*) in the late 1800s; *Hamisi Maneno* (typical Swahili names); *Hatari*, *Tumbotele*, and *Simba*, to name a few, are indicating the relationship between them and the Coast. Contradiction is that there were no active Muslims in Kibosho until the late 1960s, when the mosque was established in a rural area with very few members and the majority being immigrants.

Also, there is the hypothesis that Moshi was for Wakilindi and that Wakilindi were the ancestors of some Chagga clans. One narrator of the Chagga oral tradition, Esaria Meli, who claims to be the great-grandchild of Mangi Meli of Moshi, claimed in his video posted on social media (You Tube) that the Wa-Mochi were of Kilindi descent and

migrated from Usambara under their Chief Semboja to Moshi or Moshie (Meli, 2019).

The literature review makes the claims questionable as the recorded account of the Usambara polity shows that Semboja ruled very briefly in 1890, but on April 30, in the same year (1890), Mputa I took over the throne for the second time. Mputa I had been on the throne from 1870 to 1890. This, therefore, means that after the conflict over the throne, Semboja fled to Kilimanjaro, which could take his caravan weeks or months to reach and settle in Moshi. This very Semboja is said to be the grandfather of the founders of the Moshi polity, which dates from the 1830s. Rindi, who is known to be the fourth Mangi (chief), was enthroned for the first time in 1860, up to 1862. Kitori took over in 1862, up to 1870, when he died. Rindi took over for the second term, from 1870 to 1891. Meli took the throne in 1891 and ruled until 1900 (Cahoon). Therefore, the tradition presented here cannot be established because of the timelines for both Wakilindi and Wamochi polities.

Differences seen need more clarification or investigation to clear discrepancies before accepting the theory. The close analysis shows that Semboja was a contemporary of Meli, who is said to be his distant descendant. Then, if the Wamochi could have immigrated from Shambala to Kilimanjaro, there is a probability that some of them settled in Kibosho with time, as they share language and clan names. However, oral traditions about the origin of Wakyiwoso are obscure, as one sage narrated:

*I used to hear that our forefathers came here from different places at different times. These people were travelling from one place to another with their cattle. Initially, they neither practiced agriculture nor commerce but lived by collecting some tuba plants, which were plentiful in the streams of the mountains of Kilimanjaro and Usambara. They slowly started to domesticate some plants, and every newcomer was coming either with new plants or technology. Then we had great yams and other species of yams. Some Taro species are special among the Wakyiwoso because they are also used in certain rituals. The species ascribed to a Sambaa woman is not used for any ritual. (Male, c. 52 years, November 2020)*

It was also narrated by some respondents that, other species of yams included *nduu/mamaya* (*Dioscorea bulbifera*), commonly known as air potato or air yam (*nduu ta uye*), and some tuba plants such as '*maduma*' taro in Kikyooso dialect *maduma* (SW. *magimbi*) were brought by different latecomers like Wa-Sambaa/Wakilindi. Some species of *magimbi* are called (*maduma a-nka-nsambaa*, literally meaning the Sambaa woman's taro or plants. In most cases of postmortem rituals of the woman, the yam is involved.

This may suggest some influence from the people where these tuber foods originated.

According to Winter (2009), the Chagga emergence resulted from a coastal exodus. Due to the coastal influxes until about early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Kilimanjaro may have reached a total of about 30,000. These people came from coastal areas and were the ones who introduced the irrigation system—the water furrow of maybe 2–6 km length, which would have engaged the labour capacity of all respective male youths and men for perhaps two to three years (Winter, 2009). Winter used the irrigation system as a clue to its origin, but other elements like taboos, rituals, and languages are not considered.

The above hypothesis was supported by the prevalence of early Swahili names among the Wakyiwoso, though the question of why those Islamic names were devoid of their religion arose. The question was unanswered. Other indications were one of the taro species (*maduma a' nka-nsambaa*), meaning the Shambala woman's taro, suggesting that it was brought by a Shambala woman. This led the study to hypothesise that the first Chagga and Wakyiwoso in particular, though they did not come from the coast, had interaction and were influenced by people from the coastal area.

Reliable written historical accounts of the Chagga date from the nineteenth century. The first European to reach the mountain was a missionary, Johannes Rebmann, who arrived there in 1848. At that time, Rebmann found that Kilimanjaro was so actively involved in far-reaching trading connections that a chief whose court he visited had a coastal Swahili resident in his entourage. Chagga chiefdoms traded with each other, with the peoples of the regions immediately surrounding the mountain (such as the Kamba, the Maasai, and the Pare), and also with coastal caravans. Some of this trading was hand-to-hand, some of it at markets, which were a general feature of the area (Encyclopaedia of World Cultures, 2018; Chagga, 2018).

Therefore, a German writer, Raum (1909) believes that there is a tradition concerning the settlement of the land that has resulted in the present division of the area: Some of the migrants came from the plains, while others came from the forest areas. So when the last group of settlers arrived, they found people who were already living on the mountain. The first people who lived on the mountain were probably of pure Bantu stock, close relatives of the Wataita, Wakamba, Washambaa, and Wapare people. These groups belonged to the more recent Bantu people who moved in from the north. For example, the inhabitants of the Mbokomu area, west of Moshi, migrated from the Tana River. However, the present coastal dwellers to date have no taboo, post-mortem rituals, or even economic activities that can easily relate to the Chagga people and Wakyiwoso in particular. The above hypothesis, that the

first Chagga people were the exodus from the coast, seems to be questionable because there are no traces on the coast that show that there are irrigation systems that fetch water a hundred and fifty metres from the river to the mountain ridges. Coastal post-mortem rituals have no exhumation as the Kyiwoso because the Kilindi, Shambala, Zigua, and Bondei do not exhume, and there is nothing like this in their history.

According to oral traditions, the present generation has a tradition about some clans that took sanctuary in Chaggaland and later were assimilated into the tribe. For example, the Kiria and Makundi clans of Morang'u and Kyiwoso, respectively, are from the Shana clan of the Asu tribe. The other clan is Msuya, which is found both among the Kyiwoso and Asu ethnic groups. These people came at different times for different reasons after the Chagga ethnic groups had established themselves. The main reasons were civil wars, famine, and a flight due to criminal offences. The Shana people were accepted due to their knowledge of blacksmiths or ironmakers who were professionals in making iron weaponry and agricultural tools (Kiria, Makundi, & Mdeme, personal correspondence 2020).

#### *Post-mortem ritual*

In so many aspects post-mortem rituals are very similar to the coastal people and the Chagga. These similarities are at the stage of burial. The Wakyiwoso have the second stage of exhumation of human relics after burial very little is known at the present.

### ***Eastern and Northern African Origins Postulation***

#### *Migrations and Agricultural features*

According to this postulation, original migrants of Bantu background have intermarried with people of Hamitic as well as Semitic origin; hence, the Chagga people do not constitute ethnic homogeneity (unity). The ethnic foundation of these people is Bantu, although there is a strong element of Hamitic (Maasai) as well as Semitic (Wakilindi) origin. The pure Bantu man has a short and heavy stature, strong prognathism, protruding lips, and is of dark colour (Raum, 1909).

A close analysis renders Raum (1909) to be cynical as racial as the concept for the Bantu as concerned is not a biological one; hence, it has nothing to do with stature and other human traits or biological characteristics. Bantu is an ethnocultural group, as it is to Semitic and Hamitic. Therefore, the term "Bantu" should be understood as a linguistic and cultural term that covers people of diverse biological origins who have been together over a period of time and have common language patterns and culture. In the narrow meaning of the culture, even the Chagga themselves, as far as observation of this study is concerned,

are not necessarily united by sanguine blood, akin to common ancestry, but by common history, as "the binding factors of such ethnocultural groups are ties of blood, a common dialect or language, common historical experiences and natural milieu, common local patriotism, and a common model of life" (Messner, 1958).

Apart from the ties of blood, other factors can bring the group together as one, even if they are mixed races. Most sources that confuse linguistic classification with race or biological characteristics are colonial by nature. Colonial anthropologists and historians assumed the mission of making the colonial subjects believe that all signs of development belonged to the whites; this was called the "Hamitic myth" (Itandala, 1997).

However, some traditions say that the Chagga came from the north along with the Asu or Pare, Zigua, and Sambaa people before 1500 AD (Clarke, 1965). Sometimes the Chagga are looked at as a multi-ethnic people who arrived at Mount Kilimanjaro in different waves, assimilating the indigenous people, mostly Taita and the Kamba. Mtalalo (2015) believes that originally, the Chagga came from different Bantu groups who migrated from other parts of Africa to settle around Mount Kilimanjaro. Early migration of the Bantu from the Niger-Congo led the Chagga to settle in the North Pare Mountains, home of the ancestral Chagga. As the population increased, some people started looking for a new place to live. They later settled on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, which was a thick forest by then (Mtalalo, 2015).

Though it is not sufficiently established, (Boeree, 1970), indicates that the first people who introduced the farrow systems must have come from agricultural cultures like Egypt, Sudan (also known as Lower Egypt), and Ethiopia because irrigation systems predated the Europeans in East Africa; this was because in Kilimanjaro, both mountain terraces and flood plain irrigation were practiced for centuries before the colonial era. The same is supported by Murdock (1959) that the immigrants lived on the more elevated slopes of the Pare Mountains, Mount Kenya, Kilimanjaro, and Meru, as well as the plateau land, where they apparently found only Bushmanoid hunters in possession. Megalithic Cushitic practices of intense irrigated agriculture on terraced fields appear to have preceded them here, as the mountain Bantu continues these practices along with a host of other customs that are unquestionably of Cushitic ancestry (Murdock, 1959).

The relationship between the Chagga and the Cushitic people is also attested in their diet taboos. 'Except for the Taita, the Bantu of this province do very little hunting and little or no fishing, and in general observe the Cushitic taboos against eating fish and game fowl' (Murdock, 1959). One respondent maintained that:

*Among the Kiywoso, food taboos were held with reverence. Our ancestors only ate domesticated animals, preferably cows and goats, and rarely could they eat wild animals or fowl. There were some taboos based on gender and some on clan. (Female, 2020)*

In the Jewish literature, Egypt is recorded for her irrigation culture and makes a contrast to the Canaan Land in Mesopotamia, where the farmer was to depend on rainfall rather than irrigation methods prevalent in Egypt at that time. ‘For the land which you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you could sow seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden’ (Deuteronomy 11:10) (the Revised Berkeley Version in Modern English).

#### Post-mortem Rituals

There are some similarities between Easter and Northern Africa in terms of post-mortem rituals. In Egypt, for example, they preserved the relics of their dead just like Wakiyoso; they used masale, or Dracaena, which are

known as sacred plants of good luck and prosperity. (Hodsdon, 2023). However, this makes it credible that the proto-Kiywoso people may have come from Egypt, Sudan, or Ethiopia. They could use their irrigation skills to make furrows and make wealth through agriculture.

### Gikuyu Exodus Postulation

#### Migrations and Agricultural features

It is true of the other names, especially by Kahe, and the other one is referred to by Mojola as Pare the Asu. It is possible that the name Kirima was the result of migrants from Kenya who settled in a certain place in Moshi before colonial rule, and it should not be used for the entire people. Kĩrĩma is a Gikuyu word for mountain. E.g., *Nĩ hinya kwamabata kĩrĩma*. It is difficult to climb a mountain’ (Lughayangu.com, 2019). The Gikuyu and Chagga, especially the Wakiyoso languages, share many words. For example, the word for clean (verb) in Kyikyiwoso is *sambia*, while in Gikuyu it is *thambia*; others are as listed hereunder:

**Table 1: Chagga - Gikuyu Linguistic Comparison**

Kyikyiwoso	Gikuyu	English
<i>idikia</i>	<i>Idikia</i>	believe/ respond
<i>ihoa (ngaku’oya)</i>	<i>Ihoya</i>	pray/beseech plead with
<i>ikumi (irukumi)</i>	<i>Ikumi</i>	ten
<i>imwi (als nsu)</i>	<i>Imwe</i>	one
<i>Īnya</i>	<i>Inya</i>	four
<i>iriti</i>	<i>Iriti</i>	lion/beast
<i>isasadu</i>	<i>ithathadu</i>	six (two threes)
<i>mburu</i>	<i>mburi</i>	goat
<i>ngaari</i>	<i>ngaari</i>	car/ tyre
<i>nyanya</i>	<i>nyanya</i>	eight
<i>saka</i>	<i>thaka</i>	wild/wilderness

#### Source: Field Data 2020

It was also found that though the Gikuyu language relates to languages spoken by some Chagga ethnic groups and Wakiyoso in particular, as one respondent poses:

*The Chagga did not admit this attribution of belonging to Gikuyu by ancestry. This may be partly because of Gikuyu nationalism, which led to the Guarila War known as MAUMAU and was led by Gikuyu Tribesmen. As they wished to befriend their colonial masters, the British, they could not admit their fraternal affiliation and betrayed. They admitted the rest of the Kenyan ethnic groups, such as Taita and Kamba, who had no history of strong, active resistance to colonialism...(Male, 2020 ).*

The Chagga were endowed with a sophisticated agriculture economy and infrastructure thanks to Sir Charles Dundas. From 1991 to 1924, Dundas is regarded as Moshi's most beloved colonial district officer. He was nicknamed “Wasaoye-wo-Wachaka”, which translates to "the grandfather of the Chagga," was his nickname. (Ogutu, 1974).

#### The taxonomic analysis of musa to determine the Wakiyoso Origin

In this subsection, the study analyses data about the origins of Wakiyoso through agricultural and post-mortem features, namely rituals of burial and exhumation of human

relics (RBEHR), and compares and contrasts them with the Wakiyoso of Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

**Table 2: Taxonomic analysis of *musa* to determine the Wakiyoso Origin**

Term	Language	Meaning	Comments
<i>Kisumu/Githumu/Shumu Chagga/logoli</i>	Tiriki-Luiya and Nyole Cultivar group Gikuyu/	A cluster of banana plants/cultivar group	Maasai as well, the Hadza borrowed from the Chagga before their migration from Kilimanjaro.
Nyinda	Chagga/ Kyikyiwoso	Musa plantain	One of Massawe <i>nyinda</i> is attributed to the origin of the <i>musa</i> in Kibosho. Their females are named <i>Manyinda</i> .
<i>Masaho</i>	Chagga/ Kyikyiwoso	Dry leaves of the Musa plant	Musa dry leaves are used for bedding, making head-pads for carrying firewood and any loads over the head. They are also used for cattle pens and thatching houses.
<i>Ikundu, Makundu Chagga/Kyikyiwoso</i>	Chagga/Comoro	Ripped bananas	The same name, " <i>kundu</i> ," is used in the Comoros, which means "ripe <i>musa</i> ."

#### Source Study 2020

The above chart indicates some relationships between Chagga and other ethnic groups, and Wakiyoso in particular, are related to some near and distant societies as far as Malagasy. Names of *musa* reveal that the Chagga ethnic groups and the Wakiyoso in particular share a great deal of culture and behaviour that are related to manipulation of *musa* and their products. The Wakiyoso are related to Malagasy for their *musa* cultivation. For example, in the year 2021, Madagascar was number 32 in banana production (ReportLinker, n.d.). The Merina, like Wakiyoso, also share credibility for their irrigation systems used in rice puddles and *musa* plants. (Though Wakiyoso do not cultivate rice.)

*During the rite of initiation known as 'udini' that is male circumcision, the master of initiated graduates narrated their clan origins, showing their movements and contacts with other societies, and giving the reasons why they kept trekking until they reached Mount Kilimanjaro. This was done in one of the rituals known as 'nduumo wo ukongo' or rumaiyo. This is narrated with songs and lectures and starts with a stanza 'adanyi'a'n tee, nkuwiye'n te,....' which in English literally means (listen carefully, so let me tell you...) then the Nkeku (master/mistress, also the wise man/woman or the good sage) would narrate the secrets of society and use some clues*

*to justify some taboos which others would be taking for granted without knowing their deep meanings. "Some taboos are related to some societal experiences in the past, and keeping them would be a good reminder of past social events". (Male, 2020).*

According to Razafindrakoto (2006) Malagasy also, seems to have typical Wakiyoso post-mortem ritual *famadihana*, a set of traditional burial and exhumation rituals of the Merina and Betsileo ethnic groups of the central highland. Whereas the Wakiyoso have been facing religious opposition from Catholics and Protestants, the Protestants in Madagascar have traditionally rejected the *famadihana*, arguing that it represents a pagan tradition. However, the Catholics have at least tolerated RBEHR since the Second Vatican Council in the first half of the 1960s, and the same has been gradually incorporated into their theology and liturgy. (Razafindrakoto, 2006). These ethnic groups have great awe for their ancestors, just like Wakiyoso. They have struggled to maintain the *famadihana* for centuries amid criticism, just like Wakiyoso. If the RBEHR were the key factor in tracing the source of the Chagga and Wakiyoso in particular, the Malagasy would be their cradle. However, there is no enough data to establish the postulation.



### ***The Mushite origin postulation***

There is a myth that the Chagga people are related to Israel through Moses descent. The study interviewed a male respondent who was one of the great grandchildren of Mangi Sina about the origin of Wakiwoso, whom we may call the sage from the Mushi clan, (he died a year after the interview in the year 2021 at the age range 70 to 80) who said that:

*It is impossible to give a perfect account of the origin of the present Wakiwoso. However, he said that he was confident enough to narrate his royal lineage rather than the whole population of the Wakiwoso. The sage started by telling the researchers that some Wakiwoso, including his predecessors, originated from Israel. He mentioned the Mushi, the person mentioned in the Old Testament books, especially in the Pentateuch; with the patronymic Mushites." (Male, 2020).*

This was referring to the following Judo-Christian literature:

Exodus 6:19, and the sons of Merari are Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their genealogies.

1. Numbers 3:20 and 3:32 are the sons of Merari according to their tribes: Mahli and *Mushi*. These are the clans of the Levites, according to their families.
2. 1 Chronicles 6:19: The sons of Merari are Mahli and *Mushi*. Now these are the families of the Levites according to their ancestors.
3. 1 Chronicles 23:21: The sons of Merari are Mahli and *Mushi*. The sons of Mahli are Eleazar and Kish.

The sage added that:

*The Mushi family migrated to Africa and then to Tanzania, past the Rift Valley to the Arusha (before Maasai arrived in the region), and climbed up to the mounts Meru and Kilimanjaro feet before any other Chagga group. The first person he mentioned was Yansanya, who, after reaching Tanzania, settled in Arusha (Arumeru). This is why they were related to the Maasai during the Colonial era that took place after the arrival of the Maasai people. Then some Yansanyas advanced to Machame, leaving some family members back in Meru. Another group, led by Kimboka, left Meru for Kilimanjaro to join their brothers at Machame. They were received by their brothers. Thus, the Kimbokas settled at Machame*

*with his elder brothers, who had been there for decades by then. But the kinsman in Machame mistreated the Kimbokas.*

*It came to pass that one of their host (elder brother) conducted the initiation rite known as udini (circumcision) for all young people, including the Kimboka's, whereby the host directed the surgeons to cut off the whole penis of the Kimboka's family. Many youths bled to death. Recognising the incident, the Kimboka made an unplanned flight that night, heading to the present location of Kibosho. The first settlement was at Nchona, a hamlet in Uchau village, Kibosho Mashariki ward. In the new place, the present Uchau village, the Kimbokas were hosted by the Kulaya clan. The clan was residing at Nchona. Kimboka was very rich in cattle, and he used to prickle cow arteries for fresh blood, which was used for food including mlaso or usao (blood mixed with milk) and kisusio (soup mixed with fresh blood). Because of his generosity, the kimbokas were so loved. They respected the Kimboka. They made leaders out of them. Hence the first Mangi Mushi Kimboka. The patronymic Mushite, or Mushi, was revived. In the real sense, the first Mangi was Kimboka rather than Yansanya, as many used to believe (Male, 2020).*

The analysis of the above tradition simply tells us that the Wakiwoso, or their royal family, originates from Israel and from a Levite or priestly family. It is historically true that, until now, the Mushi clan was the royal family from which the Mangis of Chagga descended. Also, it is historically plausible that the royal family was not the first people to settle at Kibosho, though it is not so clear who the oldest clans were to settle over there. Biblically, it is obvious that the Mushi and Mushites were connected to the Pentateuch and to the exodus generation of 40 years since the time the Israelites came out of Egypt. Leuchter (2013) notes that the description of an Ephraimite boy (Samuel) is more or less in line with the model that he suggested for early Levites. He further suggests that this existent body of cultic professionals were what scholars call the "Mushite priests" (from the Hebrew *muši*, "[ones from] Moshe/Moses" found in Exodus 6:19; Numbers 3:19, 26:58, and elsewhere). This group, which seems to have controlled some of the major sanctuaries during the early Israelite period, housed priests who claimed descent from Moses, a legendary holy man remembered as somehow instrumental in the early break with Egypt (Leuchter, 2013)

According to recorded history, the Chagga people reached East Africa in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as nomadic groups (Clarke, 1965). This makes it impossible to be part of the Israelites. The Jewish people were dispersed in 70 CE after the

inversion of the Roman legions that were led by Commander Titus to suppress their rebellion. By then, the Israelites were already advanced in many ways, both culturally and technologically, compared to the people who are now known as Chagga and the Wakiwoso in particular. The concepts of the Chagga and the Wakiwoso about the world and the Supreme Being also differ to the extent that the two people are from two different cultures. The cult of ancestors among the Chagga and the Wakiwoso in particular lays in sharp contrast with Israeli culture. Though the Israelis may, from time to time, be influenced by gentile divinities and cultures, they never diminish in the *Yahweh* cult. However, the practice of dumping the dead and exhumation of the chosen people for reburial, circumcision of the male, and the patriarchal social system of both may show some similarities, which may also be accounted for in many other ways, such as the contact of migrants from Ethiopia and Sudan, and the contact with the coastal area may also be a factor in some cultural similarities.

Therefore, if and only if there can be some connection of blood between the Israeli and the Chagga and the Wakiwoso in particular, this might have happened indirectly via the queen of Sheba, who was pregnant with King Solomon when he paid him a visit after he was enthroned as the third King of the United Kingdom of Israel. Yet the oral traditions are closely related to the landscapes of inhabitation in the Mount Kilimanjaro area of Tanzania.

Also, in the early part of the first millennium CE, some people arrived on the plains around Kilimanjaro, which have more recently become the home of the Eastern Nilotic-speaking. In those early times, these intruders had to conquer the Cushitic herders. They were speakers of Southern Nilotic. Their modern descendants are, e.g., the Barabaig or Datoga, mostly of Hanang District. Culturally, they represented a mixture of the 'Old Nigritic' culture, with at the surface pervasively 'Hamitic' or 'East-Hamitic' features. Their interactions with the people of Chagga also left traces in the latter's idioms, culture, and economy. The Chagga word "*mpece*" (vr. *mbyeke*) for *Eleusine coracana*, which became an important ingredient of their local beer as well as their baby food, is derived from the Southern Nilotic root '*pec*'. Eleusine millet was originally domesticated either in northern India or Ethiopia (Hemp & Hemp, 2009). This is questionable and needs more evidence as the Chagga were not on the scene before 15<sup>th</sup> century that is second millennium CE.

The above information sheds light on the question of the origins of not only the Wakiwoso but also the majority of Chagga groups. However, the riddle of where the Wakiwoso originated is not yet solved, as other sources still show the close connection of the Wakiwoso with

Malagasy. This has been linked through linguistic traces, agricultural activities and crops, and postmortem rituals, especially the burial and exhumation of human relics.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to trace the origins of the Wakiwoso of Kilimanjaro. Though there are no origins for the Wakiwoso, which can be reliable without further questions, it is plausible to accept that the Wakiwoso may be a mixture of many ethnic groups and races. The RBEHR, though borrowed from some proto-Kiywoso groups, was evolving over time as a response to ecological demand. The study supports the tentative theory that Wakiwoso evolved for centuries, blending from race to race and ethnic group to ethnic group, adopting and adapting cultures while assimilating and being assimilated at different times and places. And that the ethnic group is not permanent but is a result of people's histories.

First, the Wakiwoso are related to the people of the coastal areas by religious and commercial influence, taking Swahili and Arab names. They were also related to the Kilindi or Shambala of Tanga by intermarriages who brought some species of taro plants to Kilimanjaro. And they relate to Indian Ocean islands and Malagasy by agricultural, especially musa cultivation, the Chagga holy shrub *isale* and their post-mortem rituals that is exhumation of the human relics.

Second, original migrants of Bantu background have intermarried with people of Hamitic as well as Semitic origin; hence, the Chagga people do not constitute ethnic homogeneity (unity). The ethnic foundation of these people is Bantu, although there is a strong element of Hamitic (Maasai) as well as Semitic (Wakilindi) origin. The study argues that these are cultural linguistic elements, as Hamitic or Semitic denote language families. Which also influenced the Wakiwoso. It is true that Arabs, Medes, and Persians had many years of contact with the coastal people, and eventually their caravans penetrated into the interior, influencing the interior tribes, including the Chagga.

Third, a linguistic study reveals a tight relationship between Kiywoso and Gikuyu. Rather than claiming ancestry, the respondents acknowledged that they were related to the Gikuyu by living together at some point in history. The colonial past could play a role in this. The Gikuyu people in Kenya organised a guerilla conflict with the British colonial. Therefore, acknowledging any brotherly relationships was risky. All opposition was brutally put down in Tanganyika, and the Chagga people made friends with the colonial powers during British colonial control, who also bestowed upon them several

favours. Kirima, a plant that grows in Kyiwoso and other areas of Kenya, was suggested as well. Consequently, it is impossible to ignore the Gikuyu's influence on Kyiwoso history. Nonetheless, the Gikuyu post-mortem customs had nothing to do with exhumations.

Fourth, though the Mushite postulation is very attractive and well-wedded with myth and the biblical account of the Pentateuch, it suffers from many shortcomings. One thing some scholars would judge with haste was the physique and colour of the Israelites and the Wakiwoso. But that is solved by the fact that the Mushite made a flight because of racism because they looked black or like Ethiopians. However, one may ask when these people made a flight to their maternal uncles' land. If it were earlier, before the Common Era, it would make some sense. But if it were after the fall of Jerusalem, it would seem so difficult, as by that time, Israelis had developed both scientifically and technologically reliable techniques that would have helped the Chagga develop easily without colonial hands.

## 5.2 Recommendations

This study recommends the following to fill up the gaps that emerged during this study:

1. A multidisciplinary study of linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology is needed and should be conducted to trace the movements of the people from the coast and Usambara Mountains to Kilimanjaro by collecting, comparing, and analysing their myths, ornaments, taboos, and totems to determine their influence on the emergence of the Wakiwoso of Kilimanjaro.
2. The tests of the old fossils of the ancestors of every neighbouring Chagga ethnic group should be undertaken to determine their relationships to each other. This is done by exhuming their relics or archaeology.
3. In future studies, the Malagasy origin of Wakiwoso postulations needs to be tested through DNA and Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) technology. Also, there is a need to conclude the assumptions about the Mushite and Ethiopic origin postulations. This will help to ensure the precision of the assumptions and help in rewriting the Wakiwoso history and the Chagga as a whole.

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