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Anthropology in Northern Rhodesia: Zacharia Johan Mawere and Godfrey Wilson at Broken Hill, 1938-1940

Mary Mbewe[1*], Dingase E. Mtonga[1], Mwaka Siluonde[1]

[1]Mulungushi University, Department of Education, Kabwe, Zambia; Email: marymbewemazimba@gmail.com
[1]Mulungushi University, Department of Education, Kabwe, Zambia; Email: mtongadingase@gmail.com
[1]Mulungushi University, Department of Education, Kabwe, Zambia; Email: msiluonde@mu.ac.zm

*Correspondence: Mary Mbewe Email: marymbewemazimba@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In 1993, the anthropologist Roger Sanjek provocatively asserted that there was a "hidden colonialism" in the histories of social anthropology. By this he meant that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, anthropology historically relied on local assistants, often from colonised or marginalised communities, to gather data and facilitate research in the field. However, he suggested that these assistants were frequently undervalued, exploited, and excluded from the academic recognition and benefits associated with the research they contributed to. Sanjek argued that these dynamics mirrored colonial relationships, where indigenous peoples were often instrumentalised for the benefit of colonial powers without receiving proper acknowledgement or compensation. In the context of anthropology, this dynamic perpetuated power imbalances and reinforced colonialist structures within the discipline itself. Several scholars have shown how anthropologists wrote out indigenous research assistants and informants in their published work. They did this to boost their ethnographic authority. And yet, the field materials such as diaries and field notes of many such anthropologists are breaming with the presence of these indigenous workers, showing their centrality to these knowledge production processes. This is certainly the case with the British anthropologist Godfrey Wilson who conducted pioneering urban anthropological research in Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia between 1938 and 1941. Wilson's research assistant Zacharia Mawere and a range of African informants did not feature in his published work. Based on in-depth archival research on Godfrey Wilson's archival materials housed at the African Studies Library of the University of Cape Town, this article examines Zacharia Mawere's work as Godfrey Wilson's research assistant at Broken Hill. Mawere not only collected biographic sketches of fellow Africans at Broken Hill, but he also wrote about his siblings and their life histories. These family histories are incomplete not least because the narrations end in 1941 when Wilson left. Nevertheless, they allow us to recover the identity of Mawere and allow us to share his life history as one that needs to be told. In doing this, the article contributes to the growing literature on African research assistants in histories of scientific and anthropological knowledge production in colonial disciplines.

Keywords: Social anthropology, indigenous research assistant, Broken Hill, labour migrant, Zacharia Mawere, Godfrey Wilson, Northern Rhodesia, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute

INTRODUCTION

This article is broadly located within the history of anthropology which emerged as a subfield of anthropology in the 1970s following the self-reflexive and historic turn in the discipline (Henrika, 2008). Traditionally, the history of anthropology has been told

within European, male frameworks (Deuben & Mbewe, 2021) that emphasised the contributions of European male founders and anthropologists to the innovation of theory and schools within the discipline (Kuper, 1973). Such approaches were concerned with telling the discipline's history through successive schools of thought including functionalism, structuralism, and structural functionalism, and the stories of the founders of these schools, who were usually male and European (Hammond-Tooke, 2001). These school-based approaches were challenged strongly by the emergence of postcolonial studies and micro-historic approaches to history which sought to deconstruct such grand, euro-centric narratives and histories by calling for more representative narratives, among other things, for subaltern figures to feature within the historical narrative (Mbewe, 2023). These processes have challenged us, among other things, to narrate histories of anthropology from the viewpoints of indigenous assistants and informants, recovering their identities and agency.

The article is based on the analysis of the work of the British anthropologist, Godfrey Wilson who conducted anthropological research among Africans from 1938 when he was appointed as the first Director of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute to 1941. In the case of Godfrey Wilson's work in Broken Hill, the work of recovering agency at the site of knowledge production is particularly necessary given that Wilson did not make direct reference to his assistant or informants in his published essays. This may have been because, as Andrew Bank argued in an essay on the anthropologist Monica Hunter Wilson and her assistants in the Eastern Cape and Pondoland, the 'writing out' of informants and in particular research assistants in the published texts of anthropologists were a methodological feature of the discipline in this interwar period. This ensured that ethnographers maintained the 'fiction' of 'ethnographic authority', thereby downplaying any 'sense of vulnerability, confusion or dependence' in the field (Bank, 2013). Nancy Jacobs also drew attention to the fact that exclusions of contributions of local assistants in scientific research in the nineteenth century were a result of 'increasing racism and intellectual arrogance among whites (Jacobs, 2006, p. 569).'

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anthropology's Hidden Colonialism? The Micro-Politics of Social Scientific Knowledge Production in Africa

It is partly because of this writing out of African research assistants that Roger Sanjek, in a 1993 essay, argued that there was a 'hidden colonialism' in anthropology, in the sense that the intellectual contributions of the members of communities studied by anthropologists remained largely unacknowledged (Sanjek, 1993).

Commenting specifically on Sanjek's characterisation of indigenous informants, Lyn Schumaker (2001, p. 6) argued that;

> a focus on the anthropologists' exploitation of assistants [and informants] may cause one to downplay assistants' agency in fieldwork and exploitation of anthropologists for *their* own ends… [A]ssistants and informants can be 'indigenous ethnographers' with their own independent interest in cultural matters already existing or stimulated by the anthropologists' interest.

She thus pointed out that the informants' and assistants' subjective positions influenced how they shaped the narratives and interacted with the anthropologists. These counterarguments foregrounding fieldwork and African agency are the major motives for my reappraisal of the work of Zacharia Mawere in Godfrey Wilson's Broken Hill research.

Crucially, Schumaker proposed that we see the field site as *the* central location of knowledge production in anthropology, where the exercises of power between the anthropologist, the assistant(s) and their

informants were complex and collaborative.[1] She recommended that we attend to the nuances of anthropological fieldwork in colonial Africa by engaging with how the African context, the African assistants and African informants shaped the way anthropologists did their work. She calls for detailed attention to their on-site methods and practices, and introduces a range of useful theoretical concepts to frame these processes, most notably 'the co-production of scientific knowledge', 'work culture' and 'Africanising anthropology' (Schumaker, 2001, p. 5).

Indeed, interest in the work of African intermediaries in knowledge production during the colonial era is not novel, nor is scholarly interest in their biographies. Lawrence et al. echoed Schumaker's argument that Africans in the service of European colonialists, missionaries, administrators, and scholars, such as anthropologists, wielded significant authority in their respective positions. Lawrence et al. argue, for instance, that African assistants were motivated by self-interest, such as prestige and elevated social status, to serve as intermediaries (B. N. Lawrence, 2006).

Writing on African assistants' motivations to work for anthropologists in Zambia and the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (RLI), Schumaker noted that this kind of work was prestigious and provided a way for Africans to participate in social and political transformation in racially charged Northern Rhodesia. Schumaker suggested that many research assistants, drawn from the emerging educated African elite, chose to work for the institute to engage in the cultural politics of Northern Rhodesia (Schumaker, 2001, pp. 13-14). Similarly, in her discussion on Jali Makwaya, a research assistant in ornithology, Nancy Jacobs proposed that his motivations and contributions to research in Africa could have been driven by a genuine interest in scientific knowledge (Jacobs, 2006).

Megan Vaughan's subject of interest, Kenneth Mdala, may have been motivated by a desire to promote his Yao heritage, but Vaughan's narrative undeniably demonstrates his love of knowledge for its own sake (Vaughan, 2012). Monica Wilson's cast of assistants and informants in her Eastern Cape Research – including the nameless schoolteacher, and others such as Mary Soga, Dr Rubusana and Michael Geza – must have had strong political and cultural motivation in their great contributions to her work (Bank, 2013, pp. 67-94). Additionally, Mary Mbewe explored the working relationship between Godfrey Wilson and his language tutor in Livingstone, Xavier Kofie, arguing that Kofie's rich life history deserved to be told as emblematic of the experiences of labour migrants in colonial Northern Rhodesia. She argued for the significance of Kofie's life history in grounding Wilson's later research methods at Broken Hill (Mbewe, 2023).

The major problem, as highlighted by scholars like Nancy Jacobs, is the lack of sources for writing the life histories of assistants and informants. The focus has traditionally been on the scholar rather than the assistants (Jacobs, 2006, pp. 2-3). This issue is compounded by the fact that scholars' fieldwork data and records typically lack personal details about their assistants, who also did not document their own lives. As a result, assistants and informants are challenging biographical subjects. Consequently, the biographical information of assistants and informants often ends when the anthropologist's fieldwork or archival records conclude, leaving us with incomplete records of their life histories. This is certainly the case with Zacharia Mawere and the records he collected of African life histories.

Nevertheless, from the foregoing, the reconstruction of biographies of assistants, their motivation and their working relationships with social scientists has been done with some level of success and is a useful way of rethinking histories of anthropology. While this literature has brought assistants

and their agency in knowledge production to the fore, it has not as adequately probed the roles of informants in what Reynolds has called a 'triangulation of relationships' between the anthropologist, the assistant, and the informants. Reynolds suggested that a field site-based approach should equally study the relationships between the anthropologist and informants and those between the informants and assistants (Reynods, 2013, pp. 310-311).

This article adds to the expanding body of literature concerning the histories of anthropology in Africa. Primarily, it delves into the life story of Zacharia Mawere. Secondly, it explores the impact of Mawere's contributions on Wilson's research. By examining the narratives documenting his family's life experiences, we gain insight into Mawere's journey and the driving forces behind his work. We suggest also that the lives of the Mawere siblings are emblematic of African lives and labour migrants in colonial Zambia. The picture that emerges is one of complexity, and also a far more profoundly Africanist and locally based project of knowledge production than the early 1990s micro-historic debates seem to suggest. The micro-historic approach prevailing in the 1970s to 1990s calls for the study of history from the margins of power and social structures, thereby attempting to redress the exclusions of micro-historical models in political and economic history.

METHODOLOGY

The Monica and Godfrey Wilson Collection

This article is based on archival research conducted at the Monica and Godfrey Wilson archives, housed at the African Studies Library of the University of Cape Town. The collection includes papers related to the personal and professional lives of Monica's parents, David and Jesse Hunter (the Hunter papers), as well as those of Monica and Godfrey Wilson.

The E section of the papers is particularly pertinent to this study, containing archives from Godfrey Wilson's three-year research in Northern Rhodesia. This section, titled 'Broken Hill Research,' is divided into 12 subsections, each with further subdivisions. It includes 17 notebooks recorded by Wilson and Mawere between 1938 and 1940. Additionally, this series has numerous folders with raw biographical data of Africans in Broken Hill. For instance, E2 to E6 contain folders and files detailing various men in different locations within Broken Hill.

An earlier series in the catalogue, the B series, contains a substantial collection of letters exchanged between Monica and Wilson, and various individuals and organizations. These letters have proven crucial to this research. Monica's weekly correspondence with her father provided insights into her and her husband's experiences in Northern Rhodesia, allowing us to reconstruct Wilson's fieldwork activities, interactions, and routines.

Urban Social Anthropology in a Colonial Setting: Godfrey Wilson at Broken Hill

Although not as well-known as his wife, the famous South African-born anthropologist Monica Hunter Wilson (1908–1982), Godfrey Wilson (1908–1944) has been acknowledged for pioneering urban social anthropology in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia since 1964). In 1938 Wilson was appointed as the first director of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, the first anthropological research institute in Africa.[2] In this capacity, from 1938 to 1940, he carried out research in Broken Hill, at that

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

time an established mining town and industrial hub, second only to towns on the Copperbelt. His research focused on social change on African societies resulting from the introduction of a capitalist economy, mostly because of the development of mining in Northern Rhodesia. He examined how these developments affected the social structures of African societies, particularly in the emerging cities. Using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Wilson's research was largely a theoretical elaboration of the effects and scale of social change of European colonialism and global capitalism on a pre-capitalist society. His findings were published in a two-part treatise, *Essay on the Economics of Detribalisation in Northern Rhodesia* (hereafter *Essay*) in 1941 and 1942 respectively.[3] Through the analysis of labour migrants' life histories, their livelihoods, consumption patterns and relationship with their original homelands, Wilson argued that capitalism, unequal labour relations between Africans and Europeans, and the permanent urbanisation of African labourers led to African impoverishment. This went against the official colonial policies and mining companies' interests. Colonial administration and mining company policies were founded on the premise that Africans should primarily reside in rural areas, with urban centres serving as temporary locations for labour migration. The concept of labour migration entailed Africans being employed under short-term contracts in urban areas and returning to rural regions after each contract period. This arrangement absolved the colonial government of the responsibility to provide amenities and social services to Africans (Mbewe, 2018). Consequently, labour migrants during the early colonial period were predominantly male. These policies were reinforced through policing measures, such as the use of *chitupa*. Combined with unease at Wilsons's participant observation methods in a highly racialised society, it earned Wilson the antagonism of the colonial administration and mining companies, leading to the termination of his permission to do research in the Broken Hill Mine and town compounds, and his subsequent resignation in April 1940 (Brown, 1973).[4] Wilson's work in Broken Hill and for the RLI effectively ushered in a new era of urban social research in Zambia, one that has had a significant bearing on Zambian historiography (Gewald, 2007, pp. 7-8).

While many scholars, including Lyn Schumaker, Richard Brown, Hugh Macmillan, and James Ferguson, had previously written about Wilson's work, they did so without access to the 'raw' data from Wilson's fieldwork (MacMillan, 1993; Ferguson, 1999). The donation of the Wilson Papers to the University of Cape Town's Archives and Manuscripts Division in the mid-1990s has, for the first time, provided deeper insights into Godfrey Wilson's work and research methodologies that are not evident in his published texts. In the introduction to the edited collection, *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters*, Andrew Bank referred to Wilson's fieldwork diaries and other materials from his Broken Hill research as an "almost entirely untouched treasure trove" (Bank, 2013, p. 31). This is certainly true. Initially, the archive drew interest primarily for Monica's extensive anthropological career spanning half a century. More importantly, a significant portion of Wilson's field notes were recorded in the local Bemba language, which he used during his research. This language barrier made it difficult for researchers who did not speak Bemba to engage adequately with the materials.

Public Service' in *Africa: Journal of International African Institute*, 13, 1 (Jan 1940), 43–5.

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

[4] University of Cape Town Libraries, Archives and Manuscript Division, BC880 Monica and Godfrey Wilson Papers (hereafter BC880), E12.1, Director's report on the work of the first three years, 1938–40;

Anthropologist Rebecca Marsland discussed the continuities between Godfrey Wilson's immersive research style in his rural studies in Bunyakyusa in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and his urban research at Broken Hill. Marsland argued that the deterioration of his relationships with compound managers and the colonial government in Northern Rhodesia was directly related to an 'intimacy' with African informants that began during his Bunyakyusa years (Marsland, 2013). He had a 'personal fieldwork style' that involved participating in masculine activities with Nyakyusa and later Bemba men, such as sharing food, attending beer parties, hunting, and discussing women (Marsland, 2013).
Wilson's 'chief research methodology' at Broken Hill was 'the biographical sketch or life history (Hansen, 2015, p. 11)'. This involved collecting and recording in-depth information about the ethnic background, family history, employment history in town and economic status of individuals, focusing on wages and expenditure and, very significantly, their relations with their original homelands, which were measured by number of visits to the homeland as well as forms of financial and material support there. Mawere's field notebooks reflected this pattern.

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

Zacharia Mawere's Background

Our understanding of Zacharia Mawere's life comes primarily from detailed essays he wrote about his six brothers and one sister between 1939 and 1940. These essays, personally typed by Mawere, provide condensed life stories of each sibling, highlighting their educational achievements, employment history, position within the family, and financial standing. Each life history is presented as a separate document, written in English, ranging from one to four pages in length. Frustratingly, Mawere did not write an essay about himself leaving a gap in our knowledge of his own life story. Additionally, the recollections of his niece, shared in April 2024, offer limited insight into Mawere's life history, further complicating our understanding of his personal narrative.

The significance of Zacharia Mawere's siblings' life histories lies in their ability to offer indirect insights into Zacharia's own life. By examining the achievements, experiences, and roles of his siblings within the family and society, we can infer aspects of Zacharia's upbringing, values, and possibly his trajectory. While these essays may not directly discuss Zacharia himself, they provide valuable context and clues that contribute to our understanding of his background and the broader social and familial dynamics that shaped his life.

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

Mission in Nyasaland in 1935. Some of Mawere's brothers had also attended the latter school.

Herbert did indeed have the financial stature to educate his brothers. Born Herbert Zilole Mawere in 1901, he attended the Dutch Reformed Church School in Fort Jameson. After school he worked for various Europeans in Fort Jameson and Livingstone before moving to Bulawayo, where he worked for 10 years. Like many Africans of his day, Herbert was well dressed, earning the wrath of Europeans for he did not wear the clothes that Africans were issued by their employers; 'he wished always to put on a suit in the Southern Rhodesian style.'[5] In his discussion on African dress, Wilson echoes this point. He writes in the *Essay*: 'Many Europeans, also, are less courteous in their relations with well-dressed Africans than they are in their relations with those in rags, for thy resent and fear the implied claim to civilised status (Wilson, 1942, 1968, p. 20)'

In Bulawayo Herbert managed to save 50 pounds in the Standard Bank of South Africa. With these savings, Herbert started a bakery on his return to Fort Jameson. He paid 10 pounds to the district commissioner for a permit to start the business and invested 30 pounds in the business. He then involved several relatives in his business including Mawere, a 'half-mad' uncle, and others Mawere refers to as 'some classificatory brothers and sisters'.[6] Mawere must have learnt this term from Wilson, who used it to distinguish between biological siblings and other relations that Africans referred to as brothers but were cousins, for example. Herbert did not pay his brothers but sent them to school as payment for their labour. His business was successful, providing baked goods to Fort Jameson including to Europeans. A member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Herbert had been married at least three times by 1939 but was a monogamist, as he divorced before remarrying. At the time of writing the life histories, Mawere reports that Herbert had 600 pounds in Barclays Bank.[7]

Akasa Mawere was the second Mawere child and the only daughter, born on 3 January 1903. She was first married to an Indian but divorced him, after which she married a European with whom she had a daughter. This marriage ended when the European left Fort Jameson. In 1924 she got engaged to an African man, much to the relief of her relatives who did not seem to approve of inter-racial marriages. The African man paid two heads of cattle for her hand. She had four children with the third husband and by 1939 was living on the Copperbelt with him. She seemed to wield power within the Mawere family as she is 'recognised as adviser in John Mawere's family, Herbert Zilole has no power to scold her and everybody is afraid of her.'[8]

Jacob, born on August 8, 1906, was the third Mawere child. He held various odd jobs in Fort Jameson before moving to Bulawayo in 1924, following his brother Herbert. Jacob stayed in Bulawayo for eight years, during which he trained as a boxer. According to Mawere, "in 1932 he returned to his home in Fort Jameson, and after just a few days, he then kicked Mawere very badly with his thick fingers, nearly injuring one of his eyes." Jacob married in 1933 in Fort Jameson. In 1934, he left for Lusaka, where he worked for at least two Europeans before moving to Ndola. At the time Mawere wrote these life histories, Jacob was still in Ndola, with a comfortable 40 pounds in the bank, planning to start a butchery in Fort Jameson.

William Mawere, born on August 2, 1909, was the next sibling and Mawere's immediate elder brother. Mawere narrates William's life, as the black sheep of the family, through his criminal record. William worked on Fort Jameson farms for a time but frequently ran into trouble with the law and the District Commissioner, prompting him to leave for

[5] See BC880, E9.17, Zachim (sic) (assistant): biographies.
[6] Ibid.
[7] ibid
[8] Ibid.

various towns where he found ready employment. In 1924, William was imprisoned for six months for adultery. Upon his release, he committed several offences, including attempted adultery with a European woman, which led to a three-year sentence with hard labour in Livingstone. He then went to Nyasaland, where he again encountered legal issues. From Nyasaland, he moved to Nkana on the Copperbelt, where another offense resulted in a five-year sentence with hard labor. Released in 1938, he was immediately deported to Fort Jameson. In 1939, when Mawere wrote his siblings' histories, William's whereabouts were unknown.[9]

Kase Mawere, born on January 8, 1917, was the sixth child of John and Mereya. Mawere, his immediate elder brother, narrates that Kase "spent his time especially with Mawere herding cattle." Like Mawere, Kase was educated at Mwami Mission School in 1932 and Livingstonia Mission in 1935. By 1939, Kase was in Fort Jameson, helping Herbert with his bakery. Mawere notes, "he will not marry when his elder Mawere has not married yet," indicating that Mawere was not married by 1939.

The next and seventh-born son was Jeremiah Mawere, born on November 5, 1920. He attended Mwami Mission School before transferring to Chimpembi Mission near Broken Hill in 1938, where he was still living in 1939.

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

Other than through the life histories of his siblings, we also get glimpses of Mawere's character and life through his fieldnotes, evoking Clifford's suggestion that field writings can reflect the personality of the writer (Clifford, 1990). Unwittingly added in a quickly scribbled and cancelled note in one of the notebooks we get a glimpse of Mawere's character. In a side note dated 8 December 1939, the conscientious Mawere records, 'Mr Patrick entered the house at 11:30 pm without warning. And in case of theft and burglary I thought to record them down. And the names of his friends are as follows: 'Safeli + Abel.' The note was signed Z. J. Mawere. This note, together with the detail with which Mawere records his census and biographical sketches and other notes, as an indication of his diligence, sense of responsibility and meticulousness.

Although probably not as financially affluent as his elder brothers Herbert and Jacob, Mawere was a man of means. Discussing an aspect of African life whereby a group of Africans took turns in giving money to one person every month, a practice referred to shortly, Mawere notes that he had been approached for money in more than one instance and that he always turned down such arrangements because of the problems of non-payment. Like most Africans at Broken Hill, Mawere was conscious of how he dressed. Like his informants, he ordered European goods. An envelope, addressed to Mawere at Broken Hill, tucked away among the pages of one notebook reveals that Mawere did business with N. Bhaga, 'gentlemen's outfitters, Sackville Street, Livingstone, NR.' Hansen reports a similar communication where in a draft letter in one of his notebooks– Mawere writes to 'enquire for my goods which I ordered from you on 20 September 1939' in which Mawere listed his return address as 'P. O. Box number of the RLI in Livingstone (Hansen, 2015, p. 19).' This draft may indicate that Mawere worked in Livingstone before or after his association with Wilson.

Zacharia Mawere's Knowledge Work in Broken Hill

The circumstances surrounding Wilson's appointment of Mawere as his research assistant, particularly in Broken Hill, lack clarity. Unlike Leonard Mwaisumo, who assisted Wilson in Bunyakyusa and played a role in Wilson's language acquisition,

[9] Ibid

Mawere's involvement in this initial phase is absent. Speculatively, Wilson may have chosen Mawere as his assistant in Broken Hill precisely because Mawere was not Bemba-speaking, a departure from Wilson's previous assistants.

Of the total population of 7,500 men at Broken Hill, only eight per cent spoke Bemba. Most of the rest of the men came from nearby ethnic groups like Lenje, while some of these were from the Eastern Province where Mawere came from. While Bemba was establishing itself as the lingua franca along the rail line, Mawere's original language Nyanja was equally gaining currency in urban centres, especially in the central part of Zambia where Broken Hill was located. Nyanja is a dialect that combines various languages from the eastern part of Zambia. Variants of Nyanja are also spoken in parts of Malawi and Mozambique. Mawere spoke Nyanja. He was Ngoni, one of the groups found in Eastern Zambia, whose language is one of the primary dialects of Nyanja. In a letter to her father while in Livingstone, Monica expressed surprise at the fact that, in the central and southern regions of Northern Rhodesia, Nyanja was more spoken than Bemba.[10] All the interviews conducted by Godfrey were conducted in Bemba. Save for one small sentence during an interview between Wilson and Xavier in which Wilson explains a Nyanja term from Xavier's narrative, there is absolutely no indication in Wilson's notes that he spoke or understood any other local language except for Bemba. It is therefore apparent that Wilson deliberately chose Mawere, a Nyanja speaker, to be his assistant.

Wilson had learnt Bemba in preparation for working on the Copperbelt, where Bemba was largely spoken. He never worked on the Copperbelt, however. While Wilson concentrated almost solely on Bemba speakers, Mawere interviewed mostly Nyanja speakers and people from ethnic gropes other than Bemba. The people interviewed were almost all non-Bemba; most of them were Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga, all of which are variants of Nyanja. Other than the general fact that Nyanja is more often spoken in Broken Hill than Bemba, evidence from the archive supports this claim that Nyanja was an important language at Broken Hill. For example, on 23 March 1940 Wilson attended a meeting of African men there with the war information officer, to brief the men about the war and war recruitment. Muwamba (probably Mwamba), one of Wilson and Mawere's informants, was asked to translate into Nyanja.[11] The memo of 13 March 1940 which had been posted in public spaces for the attention of African men also announced the meeting in Nyanja and Bemba, with the notice in Nyanja on top and the Bemba translation at the bottom.[12] This ordering of the memo between the two languages as well as the preference of translating into Nyanja at an official meeting indicates the importance of Nyanja at Broken Hill.

As early as March 1939, Mawere was already working for Wilson. One of Mawere's earliest notebooks is labelled 'Broken Hill, March 31, 1938'. Mawere recorded no less than seven notebooks at Broken Hill. He recorded census and biographical data from the government farms, Pullon's (also spelt as Pullan and Pullen, and now Pollen residential area in Kabwe) compound, railway compound, old beer hall section, the Broken Hill market, and police camp, among others. On my count, Mawere recorded censuses for no less than 500 households.[13] The tables of African populations in the *Essay* thus drew significantly on Mawere's work (Wilson, 1941, 1968).

Mawere recorded all his notes and biographic sketches in English, unlike Wilson, who recorded his mostly in Bemba with occasional English translations. With a sporadic forward slant, Mawere's handwriting is clear, each

[10] BC880, B5.1, Monica Wilson family correspondence, Monica to her father, July 1938.
[11] BC880, E9.5, Legal proceedings.
[12] Ibid.
[13] See BC880, E1.11, E1.12, E1.14, Notebooks of assistants, recording hut census; and E1.15, E1.16 and E1.17, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches.

letter clearly written. It is clumsy in places with occasional big letters. In some places, Mawere canceled and corrected his notes a lot. This is particularly the case when he recorded the 23 pages on Ngoni marriage. Seemingly, he went over his notes after the interviews and rubbed/crossed out words, sometimes he replaces one word with another, and sometimes he corrects facts. In a few instances he typed his notes, further revising the information contained. For example, there is a typescript on the relationships between men and women which included an interview with an Ngoni girl, described below. Here he significantly altered the original content.[14] Wilson occasionally interjected in Mawere's notes, correcting some data or cancelling some words and replacing them with others. Evidently, Wilsons sometimes went over Mawere's notes or discussed them with him. Mawere's English is simple and clear, well spelt but poorly punctuated. He usually wrote English in the vernacular, obviously literally translating from Nyanja to English.

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

Additionally, he recorded important information on 'native welfare' such as money-saving and lending schemes among Africans, information Wilson drew on for the *Essay* (Wilson, 1941, 1968, pp. 76-77). These schemes, which Wilson called 'money pooling', a phrase that Mawere did not use in his notes but which he instead termed 'giving chance', involve a scheme whereby Africans in groups of two or more would decide on a rotational 'lending' of money to each other when they got paid. In a particular month, all or most of one's salary was handed over to one person who collected from different people. The next month's salaries would go to another person until every participant had received the money from the others in the group ~~and so forth~~. Mawere recorded that the scheme was very important as it was difficult for anyone to save money, and the scheme enabled people to buy valuable items in one go. The agreements were verbal. In the *Essay*, Wilson recorded these interpretations almost as Mawere had. While he talked with his informants on this practice, Mawere's interpretations and analysis influenced much of Wilson's interpretations (Wilson, 1941, 1968, p. 77). Mawere's clarity on these issues could be because as an insider-ethnographer, he had experienced them first hand. This practice, presently called *chilimba.*, was one way through which Africans navigated life and resolved problems of low wages and their changing subjectivities and consumption styles.

In one interview with the underlined title 'Ngoni girl explained to me', Mawere recorded detailed notes on romantic and sexual relationships between men and women in Broken Hill. From these notes we learn how economic needs prompted women to have several husbands when they lived in urban areas so that they could purchase clothes and send money back home. He recorded how he counterchecked this information with a 'Lenje girl and even Bemba', who affirmed that it was correct.[15] He also interviewed a couple on this topic, 'Salard and his wife who stay near the tearoom of Jacob.' He recorded portions of the conversation. Here the man condemned women for this behaviour and his wife told him that women liked men who gave them a lot of money, who loved working in different towns and who listened to women's wishes.[16]

[14] BC880, E9.7, Pagan religion, 1940.
[15] In a typed script of these interviews, Zacharia adds more details that are not in the notebook, see BC880, E9.16, Miscellaneous, for the typed notes. Here he records interviews with several boys on the topic.
[16] There is a slight difference between the original narrative in Zacharia's notebook and his typed script.

In giving his analysis, Mawere noted that it pleased men and women to receive the attention of the opposite sex – and that 'dressing properly' for 'the beer hall where they can meet many men and women' was an important part of the process.

In another notebook Mawere recorded a 23-page history of Ngoni marriages and practices.[17] The information recorded in English in this notebook is later typed in Nyanja.[18]Although Wilson's *Essay* discussed marriage rites in town, his observations seem to have been restricted to Bemba marriages that he personally observed and researched. Mawere's detailed notes on Ngoni marriage rites did not feature in Wilson's analysis (Hansen, 2015, pp. 18-20).

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

In some instances, Mawere's notes reveal a surprising zeal and engagement with his informants. In these cases, his notes are detailed, and clear and have data that are missing from Wilson's narratives. For example, when recording the details of cash expenditures by workers, he listed specific items that were bought – silk blankets, suits, clothes, shoes, and costs of each of the items (postage, deposit sent, 'wartime tax paid', clearance tax, customs duty).[19] He also asked his informants where they buy their clothes from. Thus, we learn that the favourite European companies where Africans ordered their clothes are Lenard's, Oxendale, Langfield, and John Noble ('the company that made things cheaper', Mawere adds).[20] He even recorded the average number of orders that a person made per year. After a session with one of his informants, he sees fit to add, 'His statement was provided to me in five minutes.'[21] All these reveal Mawere to have been a meticulous researcher with a love of detail.

Hansen has similarly drawn attention to Mawere's detail regarding the earlier experiences of labour migrants, particularly aspects of payment in form of cloth and not cash during the early development of labour migration (Hansen, 2015, pp. 20-21). Furthermore, compared to Godfrey's, Mawere's notes are more detailed about the trials of early migrant labourers such as difficulties of getting to urban centres due to lack of transportation.[22]

See BC880, E1.16, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches, and BC880, E9.16, Miscellaneous.

[17] BC880, E1.16, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches.

[18] See BC880, E9.20, Ngoni marriage.

[19] BC880, E1.15, Notebooks of assistants, recording biographical sketches.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

The Triangulation of Relationships: Mawere's Relationship with Wilson and His Other Informants

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

By the time Wilson started his research at Broken Hill, one year after he had arrived in Northern Rhodesia, he was already exceptionally fluent in Bemba (Mbewe, 2023). He therefore did not need an interpreter or translator for his research. His notes at Broken Hill indicate that he worked without an interpreter or translator. Secondly, Wilson hired Mawere, a Nyanja speaker, so that Mawere could work with non-Bemba speakers. The two men therefore largely worked separately. Except for little bits in the notes, it is thus difficult to get a more insightful or richer fabric of the interactions between them.

These few instances include occasional indications that Mawere accompanied Wilson to some dance competitions. In these instances, there is evidence of conversations between the two men, in which Wilson refered to Mawere as 'Zachie'. The familiarity that a shortening a name signifies may point to the close relationship between the two men. In another entry, in which Godfrey refers to Mawere simply as 'Z.M', Mawere visited Wilson at his home where he tells Wilson of a raid and some fracas that took place the previous evening in one of the African locations.[23] Mawere spoke English well. It is therefore likely that he and Wilson conversed in English.

As shown above, Mawere's notes reveal that he related easily with his informants. The fact that most of these were his kinsmen from the eastern part of Zambia and spoke Nyanja with them must have been a great advantage to Mawere. He seems to have interviewed both men and women. Nevertheless, unlike Wilson, who recorded whole conversations thereby contextualising the interactions with his informants, Mawere did not. It is therefore difficult to get a fuller range of interactions between him and his informants.

Postscript: What happened to Mawere after 1940?

The limitation with using archives such as the Wilson archives for the narration of African life histories such as that of Zacharia Mawere is that the narrative usually ended when the anthropological research came to an end. Additionally, the information in such archives is usually collected for specific purposes. Therefore, the archival records for Mawere's biography and that of his siblings ended in 1940 when his interaction with Wilson ended.

On 19 April 2022, one of the Mawere descendats Mr Charles Mawere wrote to us informing us of his connection to the Mawere family. Mr Charles Mawere was Zacharia Mawere's elder brother, Herbert Mawere's grandson. Mr Charles Mawere quickly connected us to Ms Dorice Mawere, the 96-year-old daughter of Herbert Mawere, who as of April 2024, resided in Chipata.

We conducted 2 interviews with Ms Mawere to establish what happened to Zacharia Mawere and his Siblings after 1940 (Mawere, 2024). Unfortunately, her recollections were general and not detailed. Nevertheless, we can glimpse a general idea from them. According to Ms Mawere, at some undefined point, Mawere returned to Chipata where he worked as a customs official for some time. He then relocated to Ndola, where he was employed under the Ndola City Council until he died in

[23] BC880, E9.6, Political organisations, 1940.

the 1970s. He had several children from at least two women. However, Ms Mawere did not know the whereabouts of these children or their descendants. We asked Ms Mawere if there were any documentary or photographs that Mawere had left behind. Unfortunately, any such archive was lost long ago.

Not much is not about the siblings after 1940, except for Herbert for whom there is a bit of information. Herbert continued to thrive in his business and was one of the richest businessmen In Chipata until his death. During the struggle for independence, Herbert joined politics and aided Kaunda and his compatriots. This brought him to the attention of the colonial government who allegedly conspired to have his bar burnt down. After independence, Herbert did not take up any political positions. He died in 1985. Today, only two of his children survive.

CONCLUSION

This article sought to recover the identity of Godfrey Wilson's Research assistant at Broken Hill from1938 to mid-1940. It followed increasing scholarship on the assistant, a man between two cultures who worked as a bridge between the anthropologists and indigenous communities. Despite this generic description of assistants, Mawere's role as an independent co-researcher in Wilson's Broken Hill research is evidence of his centrality in the research. Through notes on his family (specifically on his five brothers and one sister) we get a glimpse of Mawere's life. He was the fifth child in this family of achievers, having been born between 1907 and 1917. He spent his early life in a village in Fort Jameson, where he herded his family's cattle. Between 1932 and 1935, he attended school at Mwami Mission and Livingstonia Mission in Fort Jameson and Nyasaland respectively. Although his work history is not known, we at least know he worked in his elder brother's bakery at Fort Jameson before starting work with Wilson. Mawere's notebooks reveal him to be conscientious and hardworking with a zeal and enthusiasm for his work as an indigenous ethnographer. He was central to Wilson's research at Broken Hill, recording hut censuses in most of the African locations there. He also collected more than five hundred biographical sketches. Mawere also collected data on several topics at Broken Hill including material on Ngoni marriage, financial practices among Africans, and relationships between men and women. The extent of Mawere's detail in his research, particularly his interest in clothes and clothing among Africans, is one example of his significant contribution to Wilson's research This is evident when we consider the fact that clothing was an important aspect of Wilson's analysis of changing social, economic, and cultural patterns among Africans. Another contribution is on the census that Mawere conducted, which were obviously included in the statistical aspects of Wilson's work which were a major component if his analyses (Wilson, 1941, 1968, pp. 19-20). Mawere's own subjective position as an African, with personal and similar experiences to his informants, must have aided his work as an insider ethnographer. In making these general arguments, this article highlights Mawere's significance and agency in the knowledge project. His life history provides insights in African livelihoods at a specific point in history.

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