

Kaguru Descent Groups (East-Central Tanzania)

THOMAS O. BEIDELMAN

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1. Introduction

Over the past ten years I have published extensively on the Kaguru, a Bantu-speaking people of east-central Tanzania (cf. 1967*b*, 1969, 1971*b*). In several recent papers including one in this journal (1967*a*, 1968, 1970) I present various Kaguru oral histories; these emphasize especially the origin of Kaguru clans and the interrelationships between various Kaguru clans and between the Kaguru and their matrilineal neighbours. I discuss the structure and possible function of these legends in these preceding papers. There I also note how Kaguru were often able to absorb members of neighbouring groups because of the similarity in clan names and legends between them and these others. This suggests that Kaguru belief in the common origin of these various peoples may be founded on some historical truth. Surprisingly, we possess little ethnographical detail of clanship amongst most of the peoples of Tanzania, even though this is an essential tool required before we may assess much of the social and historical information available for this area. In my survey of this culture area (1967*b*) I indicate where clan lists, although these are incomplete, are available for the Luguru, Zaramo, Vidunda and

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