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“They Were Just Thrown Away, and Now the World Is Spoiled”

Mass Killing and Cultural Rites in Barlonyo

Keith Proctor

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Any errors or omissions in this report are the sole responsibility of the author.

Photo Credit

Cover photo by Keith Proctor. Site of the mass grave in Barlonyo, Uganda.

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Introduction

While mourning rituals function to heal emotional and social wounds regardless of circumstance, the mediation of grief is perhaps especially important in times of conflict. The sudden, violent loss of a loved one is traumatic and may impede, for an extended time, the return to normal life. In the aftermath of violence, proper treatment of the dead provides a vital consolation for survivors and their communities.¹

This recognition of the bonds that tie the living to the dead has become a key feature of international human rights. The United Nations' *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law* (referred to hereafter as *The Basic Principles*),² asserts that full and effective reparation requires satisfaction for victims. When the violations include killing, this requirement covers "assistance in the recovery, identification and reburial of the bodies in accordance with the expressed and presumed wish of the victims, or the cultural practices of the families and communities."

Yet this right to satisfaction is not without complications. Exhumation and reburial, in any context, are highly sensitive. If the killings occurred years prior, there is no guarantee that families of the dead will find comfort in the reburial of loved ones; indeed, exhumation risks re-traumatizing survivors. A reburial program may also face a challenge in identifying the cultural practices according to which the dead will be buried. Culture is never static. In responding to social stimuli, it shifts from one generation to the next. However, the degree of fluidity varies. In some contexts, local practices may be experiencing rapid cultural transformation. This is certainly true in places where global religion is encroaching on traditional spirituality. In such

contexts, people may feel caught between traditional customs and a newly-adopted religious doctrine. To some extent, such challenges are best addressed case-by-case, requiring programs designed to protect and enhance individual choice. Unfortunately, in certain contexts, individual preferences may contradict one another. This is particularly true in the case where bodies have been deposited in mass graves. There may be no consensus on what "proper treatment" of the dead entails. Some may request identification and reburial; others may wish the dead to remain where they are. Where exhumation and identification at a mass burial site would be an all or nothing affair, it might be impossible to satisfy all parties. This would contradict the theory behind a right to satisfaction – indeed, of reparations in general. Given that reparations are, ideally, responses that re-knit the social fabric of communities ripped apart by serious crimes, they should obviously aim to heal, rather than do further harm.³

These persistent tensions are clearly visible in the Lango village of Barlonyo, site of a 2004 massacre that remains among the worst ever perpetrated in northern Uganda. The massacre occurred during hostilities between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). A large detachment of LRA fighters, operating on orders from Joseph Kony and under the direction and command of Okot Odhiambo, killed several hundred people and abducted dozens. For various reasons, to be outlined below, those killed at Barlonyo were never afforded proper burial. During the fieldwork conducted for this study, it became evident that the poor treatment afforded to the dead continues to be a source of severe spiritual and psychological distress for the living.

This report explores how the obligations outlined in *The Basic Principles* might apply to Barlonyo.

Taking cues from *The Basic Principles*, it addresses two questions. First, what are the wishes of the families of the dead? If there is no consensus, what are the causes of disagreement and how might they be resolved? Second, if an exhumation and reburial program were implemented, according to what cultural customs would the dead be treated? Extensive interviews conducted with survivors of Barlonyo are used to outline the status of contemporary cultural beliefs. This report considers not only evolving views of burial, but also limns the political and livelihood contexts key to understanding contemporary practices. The goal is to identify the priorities of Barlonyo's survivors seven years after the massacre, and to consider those priorities within the context of a highly dynamic cultural system.

The rest of this report is organized in six sections. It opens with an outline of the methodology. Second, it details the attack and its aftermath. Third, the report examines the Langi cultural landscape. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between traditional institutions and Christian churches, and to the effect of the GoU-LRA conflict on cultural practices. Fourth, the report discusses the obligations of the living to the dead. This section discusses the traditional requirements of burial, contemporary iterations of those practices, and the social and spiritual consequences inherent in failing to meet those requirements. Fifth, community views on the appropriateness of exhumation and reburial are detailed. The report concludes with a set of suggestions for how programming the right to satisfaction – and the identification and reburial of the dead – might be designed.

Methodology

To properly summarize traditional practices around death and reburial in the context of Barlonyo, this study primarily draws upon 74 semi-structured interviews I conducted in the Lango Sub-Region during June and July of 2011. In addition to learning from massacre survivors still living at Barlonyo, I interviewed local religious and cultural leaders, including representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Uganda, cultural elders, and the Office of the Wonnyacci, the

official representative of Lango culture. Many of these interviews were arranged in collaboration with village leadership and with the African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET), a local NGO that has worked extensively with victims. Research priorities were designed in coordination with local leaders and evolved in response to issues members of the community raised. The goal throughout was to record their experiences and needs – and to be wary of speaking for them or making assumptions about their priorities. Furthermore, in order to gain a broader sense of community priorities than that afforded by my own interviews, this report also relies on a representative survey of 174 households in Barlonyo that gathered detailed information regarding the effects of the massacre on 1083 household members.⁴

Where appropriate, secondary sources are referenced to provide historical context, furnish a perspective on how cultural practices in Lango have evolved over the past century, and cross-reference informants' understanding of traditional practices that, in recent years, have fallen out of favor.

Overview of the Attack and Its Aftermath

On 21 February 2004, hundreds of LRA fighters under the command of Okot Odhiambo attacked the village of Barlonyo. What followed was among the worst massacres ever perpetrated by the LRA. Odhiambo, who was cultivating a reputation as one of the LRA's most vicious lieutenants, had been personally dispatched by Joseph Kony to exterminate as many Langis as possible.⁵ Infamously, he was instructed to “kill every living thing.”⁶ To conserve ammunition, villagers were hacked apart with machetes, speared by bayonets, and burnt alive in their huts – the latter was deemed the most efficient method of extermination.⁷

Barlonyo was ripe for an attack. At the time it was the site of a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had fled their homes as a consequence of insecurity brought by years of civil war. Though the LRA was known to be active in Lango, and had recently attacked nearby Abia, the GoU had only lightly garrisoned the camp. Of the seventy-

four men stationed in Barlonyo, none were UPDF (Ugandan People's Defence Force – i.e., the GoU military). Fourteen were members of local militia, the LDU (Local Defence Units); the remainder was made up of even less trained and more poorly supplied Amuka militiamen.⁸ Unfortunately, this token force was unable to offer a defense. On the day of the attack, many of the camp's soldiers were away at the Agweng market. The soldiers present were quickly overrun, with only a few shots fired.

In the three-hour bloodbath of that afternoon, the LRA was unhindered by government forces stationed nearby. Oti Michael was a young man living in the Barlonyo camp with his family at the time of the attack. During the massacre, his wife and four children were killed. He related the events of the attack and its aftermath:

The attack began. They came. Some of them were dressed in military uniforms. It confused everyone. We thought maybe it was the government. That is what we thought. They surrounded the barracks, proceeded through the camp. They began to burn it. We ran. Some went to Kohn-Ogur, others to Kampala. The route to Agweng was blocked. . . . When I came back the next day, so many people were dead. The place was all quiet. There were dead bodies on the road. You could not drive. Everywhere was full of dead people. You might find five dead people in a house, and there was no one to help you dig the grave. You would dig it yourself. You would bury them without ceremony or possessions.⁹

Fearful that the LRA would strike again, Oti Michael and others buried the dead. In many cases, it was impossible to identify the deceased.

Twenty-six kilometers north of Lira, Barlonyo is a tiny community of thatched houses, gardens, and a few concrete and sheet-metal buildings that lie near the River Moroto. The reminders of the massacre are everywhere. In the physical scars and economic impoverishment of the survivors, in the shuffling gait of a woman handicapped by machete cuts, in the bones occasionally turned up by a plow.

Just off the road cutting through town, the most obvious reminder of the attack is the mass grave. Shaded by mango trees, the mass grave is a circular space of tilled earth atop a concrete slab. A stone column with a plaque commemorates the victims.

The plaque at the mass grave reads: "Here lie the remains of 121 innocent Ugandans who were massacred by LRA terrorists."

As will be discussed below, mass burial severely contradicts traditional practice; however, the GoU argued that the mass grave was a necessary adaptation to horrific circumstances. The number of dead was simply too large and security around the camp too precarious to accommodate individual burials. The GoU dispatched the Minister of State for Health, Mike Mukula, to coordinate with district leadership to bury the remains in a large pit dug near the military barracks. An educated young Ugandan and cultural leader, Abu Vigilio, was present. He described a horrific scene, haunted by dogs whose bellies were swollen from feeding on corpses. "There were so many dead. The bodies were put (in the mass grave) in no order," he said. "It was scoop and dump."¹⁰

Yet the mass grave was not, it seemed, simply a response to duress. Strangely, while some of the dead – like Oti Michael's family – had been initially buried at their family home, according to abbreviated traditional rites, the government ordered that all the dead be transferred to the mass grave. Those who had been buried were dug up and brought by wheelbarrow to the pit.¹¹ "It was not good," Odongo Yuventino said. Yuventino was wounded during the attack but managed to escape. He returned to Barlonyo to find his wife beaten to death and one of his children bayoneted through the skull. He buried his wife and child at his home, but GoU officials ordered them dug up. The experience traumatized Yuventino. "It was not good. They had already been buried and they should have stayed there," he said. "Experiencing that was not good for me." A striking man with close-cropped silver hair and a floral-printed shirt, he told me that his wife and child's bodies had decomposed, that their skin was "peeling off." "It was not good for me to see that," Yuventino kept repeating. "It was not good, not good."¹²

Why the government ordered already buried remains to be unearthed has not, in the opinions of informants, been satisfactorily answered. Indeed, the only explanation offered was that burying all the bodies in the mass grave would make laying

concrete cheaper and easier. Many did not accept this reasoning; the savings, frankly, could not balance the deep cultural harm of mass burial. Some informants speculated that it was done to obfuscate the number killed, believing that the actual tally would be an embarrassment for GoU security forces. Contrary to the plaque's claim of 121 in the grave, those who assisted the military in burying remains insist that over 300 bodies lie under the concrete slab. An extensive survey of Barlonyo estimates that 420 people were killed in the attack.¹³

After the bodies were placed in the pit, the concrete slab was poured. Slightly over a month after the attack, a one-day community ceremony was held to commemorate the massacre. The ceremony was overseen by President Museveni himself, and was attended by religious and clan leaders from throughout Lango. A clan chief served as master of ceremonies. Unfortunately, no one interviewed found the ceremony sufficient. At best, it was the most that could be done under the circumstances; at worst, it was a violation of deep-seated cultural taboos.¹⁴ Many, like Oti Michael, remain deeply conflicted about the mass grave. "I came to accept why the government put people there," Michael said. "But I wish my family could have been buried at home. It still troubles me."¹⁵ Michael's anxiety reflects a tension apparent throughout the community of Barlonyo, and Lango at large: conflict between traditional requirements and compromises forced by the impoverishment and insecurity of civil conflict. The profound trauma of the massacre at Barlonyo has been magnified by the inability of the people to respond in a way that satisfies traditional beliefs. As a consequence, the psychic and spiritual wounds have never closed.

Cultural Landscape of Lango

Whereas the right to satisfaction includes "recovery, identification and reburial" according to local customs, in Lango there is no clear cultural script for how to treat the dead. This is due to the dynamic and contested nature of Langi practice. Admittedly, culture is always dynamic, shifting from one generation to the next in response to various stimuli. However, in the case of Lango, the changes of the past decades are particularly dramatic. Traditional

cultural practices, and the institutions that sustained them, have been in marked retreat. Pinpointing how local customs might fulfill the right to satisfaction is not straightforward.

Consequently, this research set out to chart the outlines of cultural transformation in Lango, including key factors contributing to the decline of traditional authority. In part, this was simply to inform conversations with informants. It was also deemed important to appreciate how and why traditional beliefs have changed so that any future policies of reparation can be mindful of this shifting cultural context.

Admittedly, the factors explaining the decline of traditional practices are manifold. Traditional beliefs – a clan-based system underpinned by communal property and the ritualized position of livestock – have been seriously compromised over the last century by colonialism, urbanization, the rise of Western-style individualism, introduction of a money economy, changing systems of land tenure, and massive looting of livestock and assets during over 20 years of armed conflict. These processes have all acted, in various ways, to undermine the strength of the clan.¹⁶ This section will consider the two factors most commonly cited by informants as contributing to the decline of traditional values. First, the introduction and adoption of Christianity as a competing belief system and, second, the extreme insecurity and impoverishment resulting from years of violent conflict.

The Rise of Christianity

Virtually all informants discussed how the rise of Christianity sidelined traditional practice. This is in line with the historical record. Christian authorities and many of its missionaries, operating under the auspices of the colonial administration, sought to marginalize – and in some cases stamp out – traditional practice.¹⁷ While Ugandans now, by and large, lead the Christian churches, a level of distrust persists. Many of those interviewed continued to believe that present-day church leaders act to specifically undermine traditional practice. According to Adong Helena, a former Roman Catholic who is now a Born-Again Christian, cultural practices are

actively maligned by the churches. “Most people are into religion,” she said, meaning one of the established Christian churches. According to Helena, Christian leaders stigmatized traditional belief. “If you practice cultural things, people don’t want to associate with you.”¹⁸ Similarly, Achan Molly, a member of the Pentecostal Assembly of God, told me that church leaders oppose cultural practices and rites, and have not allowed the people to hold a traditional funeral. “I want [the traditional rites] to come back,” she said, “but I don’t think they will.”¹⁹

Nevertheless, cultural beliefs have not been stamped out. Indeed, traditional beliefs suffuse Lango Christianity, resulting in a syncretic accommodation that is particular to the region and shapes popular beliefs around death, mourning, and burial. Evidence of this syncretism was broadly apparent. During burial, for example, some Langis believe that close relatives should throw three handfuls of soil onto a coffin after it has been lowered into a grave. The soil should only be cast by the right hand. This is partly a reference to long-standing Langi belief that the right hand was the hand of welcoming and confidence, as well as being the clean hand (a belief common to many cultures).²⁰ The importance of the right hand has been augmented by Biblical references to Moses as the right hand of God, or to Peter healing a lame man, in the name of Jesus Christ, with his right hand.²¹ Such parallels were easily accommodated. Other cases required greater flexibility on the part of Christian churches. For example, in the case of Roman Catholic funerals in Lango, before a body is buried, the presiding priest dips a branch into water and sprinkles the water on the deceased, preparing the dead for a new life and a new world. This cleansing practice, while not without Christian analogy, is rooted in Langi tradition. On issues of marriage, traditional practices maintain their relevance. Most Langis marry twice: once according to traditional practices, and then in their church. In both the Catholic Church and the Church of Uganda the traditional marriage ceremony is conducted first. (The Pentecostal Assemblies of God reverse this, with traditional marriage coming after religious matrimony.) Furthermore, according to several Protestant informants, the Anglican Church of Uganda underwrites traditional marriage obliga-

tions – which center on the provision of a dowry – by requiring a letter from the bride’s family to the groom’s confirming the terms of the dowry itself.

Evidence of the overlap between traditional and Christian belief is also linguistic. Contemporary Christians in Lango employ a spiritual vocabulary infused with cultural beliefs, and this arguably shapes their conception of the divine and their responsibilities to the dead. Any discussion of this shared lexicography requires some outline of the historical Langi conception of the transcendent.

A century ago, Langi traditional beliefs hinged on the *Jok*, a neutral spiritual entity that was both creator and sustainer of the universe. Inhabiting the wind and air, the *Jok* could be found everywhere, even in the trees or rocks.²² The *Jok* was conceptualized as the universal life force that animated the world, including human beings. Hayley described a traditional belief that at the moment of fertilization a “spark” of the *Jok*’s power entered a woman’s womb, becoming a child.²³ The *Jok* was thus an immortal spiritual essence common to all people, informing a reverence for ancestors that infuses Langi belief to this day. In this sense, the *Jok* tied the world and its inhabitants together in a web of meaning that spanned life and death, but which required ritualistic maintenance coordinated at the community level by cultural leaders. Respect for one’s predecessors, living and dead, was not merely a social compact but a spiritual one characterized by a range of propitiatory rites, perhaps the most important being burial of the dead.

The *Jok* was characterized by many aspects. The differentiated nature of the *Jok* does not seem to be simple polytheism, but rather to represent the many faces of one spiritual force.²⁴ *Jok Adongo* (*Jok* the large or powerful) was associated with trees and rain-making, while the aspect of the *Jok* as all-powerful creator of this world and the next was *Jok Jokamalo*. In present-day Lango, the Christian God and *Jok Jokamalo* are considered one and the same, presenting a continuity of reference between traditional beliefs and Christian theology.²⁵ Other terms for spiritual entities have adapted to the Christian context as well, while maintaining a traditional character. For example, *Jok* – as separate from *Jok Jokamalo* – is understood by some to describe

spirits created by *Jok Jokamalo* (i.e., God) to inhabit the trees or rocks. A *Jok* is also sometimes coterminous with *Citan*, which is a “torment by God,” a spirit that plagues or challenges humankind.²⁶ In some instances, the *Jok* has become associated with evil even as its paramount aspect, *Jok Jokamalo*, has become synonymous with the Christian deity to whom the Langi offer their prayers.²⁷

Other important terms include *tipo*, a person’s shade or shadow, which manifests when it has not been propitiated by proper funeral rites. As a representative piece of the universal life force, the *tipo* was both individual and part of the totality of the *Jok*.²⁸ However, the manifestation of a *tipo* is always malignant, typically appearing in dreams and coming to inhabit the body of the living, making them ill. As will be detailed below, many informants in Barlonyo complained of sickness and bodily pain that was a consequence not of physical hurt, but of the haunting of the dead, and/or the psychological distress they suffered as a consequence of failing those who had been improperly buried.²⁹ When a *tipo* cannot be pacified, it becomes a *chyen*, a vengeful spiritual entity that afflicts the living.³⁰

When pressed, many Langi do not count themselves as “Christian” or “traditional,” but as both. This is true up the ranks. In fact, virtually all of the Christian leaders bemoan the passing of traditional society. Many Christian elites are also cultural leaders. One such is Reverend George Okello Otim. “Culture and religion go together because you can’t be Christian if you don’t know the cultural principles,” he said. “Christ was above culture, but also in culture.”³¹ One of the most prominent Christian leaders in Lango, Charles Odur Kami, Church of Uganda bishop for the Lango diocese, is a prominent advocate of the complementarity of religion and culture. Kami is concerned that traditional practices are in a decline that cannot be arrested. “Cultural practices have eroded so much in Lango, as compared to other tribes [in Uganda],” he said,

The Langi have been losing their cultural practices over the course of a long period. . . . The cultural dances are not there . . . our children are not interested. We are losing the language of our people, most people use English instead. I want to identify with my people. We could use the language of culture to fit everything together. Jesus used the

culture to communicate in his parables. He operated within the context to get people to communicate and understand his message. Cultural practices can be brought into Christianity.³²

According to Kami, cultural practices were a social solvent and a way of addressing public immorality. “There were things that worked very well,” he said, “that were eroded with the coming of Christianity. The missionaries would have been more effective if they learned the culture of the people. Instead, they denounced it as primitive.” Church leaders like Kami have broken with their European missionary forebears, and represent perhaps the best opportunity for building bridges between cultural beliefs and the Christian churches. In Kami’s view, resolving the differences between the churches and the culture will be necessary to heal Lango in the aftermath of the GoU-LRA conflict.

Effect of the War on Cultural Practices

Almost all informants argued that cultural practices measurably depreciated as a consequence of the GoU-LRA conflict.³³ According to Dr. Absallam Kenneth Oteng, a respected cultural leader and scholar in Lira, the war fundamentally undermined clan-based, communal identities.³⁴ In contrast to Enlightenment notions of individuality, Langi identity was long rooted in kinship lines. The clan was not simply a social or economic arrangement, but vitally determined who a person was and how he conceptualized himself and his position in the world.

Due to the impoverishment of the clans, and the dislocations following the war, this social unit splintered. Rural hierarchies broke down as people fled to the cities or to IDP camps. Traditional authority dissolved. Cultural practices eroded. Prostitution, alcoholism, and incidents of violence rose. “Communalism is breaking down,” said Reverend George Okello Otim. “Individualism is rising. Widows and orphans have to care for themselves. That’s why we see street children, drunkenness, and destitution. Rape, killing, and divorce are on the rise. The society’s getting torn apart. Something needs to be done.”³⁵ George Oliwit, a prominent Langi cultural leader, agreed. When we spoke,

George was troubled by “sky-rocketing” increases in family violence in Lango, which he attributed to the breakdown of traditional and cultural systems. “Lots of drugs, drinking, frustration,” he said. “It’s taking so long to recover from the war.”³⁶

The social fragmentation caused by the war is perhaps most obvious in the case of livestock. Through the interplay of economic and spiritual commitments, herds knitted the clan together. Livestock mediated rituals of transition, including the payment of dowry (and thus marriage), initiation, and funerals, in addition to providing the rationale for communal arrangements. This changed due to the war. Raids by the LRA, and of cattle rustling by the Karamajong, exhausted Langi herds and impoverished the clans, fraying communal ties and diminishing social rituals, which people commonly can no longer afford to observe.³⁷ Cattle shortages have limited how many women a man can marry, or if he can afford to marry at all.³⁸ Non-traditional marriages, often outside the clan, have risen, which informants feared was exacerbating the social breakdown. In response, cultural institutions were attempting to evolve. In some cases, those performing rituals wore animal skin cloaks to simulate the presence of livestock.³⁹

At the time of my interviews, there seemed to be a stark generational divide. The youth – particularly those living in the city – appeared to demonstrate little or no interest in maintaining the traditions of past generations. As a consequence of dislocation and insecurity, the chain of generational transmission had been broken. According to one of my informants, Olaga Tom, because “the younger generation hasn’t been educated about the culture, they object to it. Cultural leaders try to teach them, but the kids respect Western culture as the most important.”⁴⁰ The influence of Western culture is on sharp display in Lira, in newspapers, on television, in shops selling pirated DVDs of American movies. “Traditional ways are not very strong,” Reverend Jimmy Aagang Okello told me. “And traditional rites of passage are no longer practiced. There is no longer a clear demarcation between childhood and adulthood...the diminished role of the elders has led to a breakdown in community.”⁴¹

However, arresting the long slide of traditional practices into irrelevance seemed, to many people, impossible. This distressed many informants who believed cultural institutions provide, in their emphasis on community solidarity, the best chance of forging a secure and peaceful future.

The cultural leader of Lango, and thus the defender of traditional practices and institutions, is the Wonnyacci. In theory, he is best positioned to promote the culture, shore up the clan system, and deploy traditional authority to assist Langis in mending broken communities. However, the influence of the Wonnyacci is limited by a lack of legitimacy. The office was a curious innovation, and, in its present iteration, one without deep roots in Lango society. Prior to colonization, the Langi had no vertical tribal authority, but instead were composed of horizontal factions that rarely cooperated.⁴² When cooperation did occur, it was for brief periods and in order to achieve discrete goals, such as raiding or fending off an enemy. In such circumstances, the clan chiefs (*s. awitong, pl. owitongi*) might select a war leader, known as the “paramount chief” (*wonnyacci*). In the anarchic Lango tribal system, then, the Wonnyacci was a temporary martial leader, not a permanent administrator. Clan relationships were modified and formalized by colonization, with centralized hierarchies imposed on the clans starting around 1912 under the British, who as a policy used chiefs as political surrogates.⁴³ Colonialism reshaped horizontal power and kinship structures into a vertical set of hierarchical relationships, creating a new kind of administrative chief who wielded executive and judicial powers under the British.⁴⁴ The chiefs became part of a formal hierarchy previously alien to Lango; their powers were augmented by their position as the dispensers of colonial patronage.⁴⁵

In this context, formalizing the office of the Wonnyacci was, at least in part, a political move. Within colonial Uganda, the chiefs operating within the Protectorate administration were anxious to enhance native power. In 1944 they advanced the notion of a Wonnyacci who would act as secretary general for the district, coordinating the chiefs and the provincial administration. Of course it was assumed that one of their own would fill the post.

The British, content to use the chiefs as low-level local administrators, were loath to centralize provincial administration in native hands, particularly since the recognition of a paramount chief had caused them headaches in Busoga.⁴⁶ The proposal was rejected. Furthermore, clan-based administration and patronage were subsequently undermined by a series of post-war administrative innovations made between 1947 and 1955 that transferred important powers of local law from chiefs to a District Council.⁴⁷ (The post-war goal of British Administration was to bequeath to Ugandans – and Africans in general – local democratic institutions based on the English model.⁴⁸) The chiefs, while in some cases able to maintain the patronage networks that had developed under them since the 1920s, had been largely stripped of their political powers. In 1960, the notion of the Wonnyacci was reintroduced, but as a ceremonial figure rather than as an administrative or military leader.⁴⁹ Today, the Wonnyacci is a permanent cultural office – symbolically the “number one man” in Lango, the representative of Lango and Lango culture, but without any kind of executive powers. Though in theory elected by the clan chiefs, he is effectively a civil servant paid a salary by the GoU. The current Wonnyacci, Adwong Yocam Odur, is the third to hold this office.

Informants commonly described the Wonnyacci as aloof to his people, and as more interested in wrangling politically with the GoU than in advancing the needs of Langis. If the Wonnyacci could act to unify the *owitongi* for a common goal of advancing traditional practices and rebuilding communities, then the office might reenergize Langi culture.⁵⁰ Given that most informants believed that the root cause of Lango’s social and cultural degeneration has been the decline of cultural institutions, the potential of the traditional leadership to contribute to post-conflict outcomes should not be wholly dismissed.

For even if informant interviews and my own observations suggested that the cultural leadership in Lango is quite weak, individual cultural leaders were still seen as influential. A number of those interviewed believed that the *owitongi* – who as clan leaders are local and thus closer to the people – remain, in places, highly respected. Tony Otoa was

often mentioned. A clan leader, former colonel in the Ugandan army and the Minister of Culture for the Langi Cultural Foundation, Otoa has served, in effect, as the administrator in charge of the Wonnyacci’s office. A compact man with thick glasses and close-cropped hair, Otoa worked from a small concrete building at the Lango Cultural Center in Lira. It seemed a rather thankless job. Otoa was navigating various challenges – public resentment for the Wonnyacci, tensions with the national government, and the difficulty of helping a war-torn people rebuild – all while attempting to shore up eviscerated cultural institutions.

In our interviews, he described the virtues and challenges of the Langi people as one in the same. “The Langi is very independent,” he said. “He just wants to be empowered to do his own thing. He doesn’t want to be a beggar.”⁵¹ However, Langi stubbornness, he said, can make it difficult to build consensus. Many of the challenges the Langi face today are material: “Oxen, plows – with these the families would be empowered. They need a good road and a means to grow food.”⁵² Otoa argued that the focus should be strengthening Langi men so they can support families and communities, and begin to rebuild the wealth lost during the GoU-LRA conflict. It must be noted, however, that emphasizing male-centered households and communities may further marginalize the many female-headed households now present after the war.

Otoa argued that poverty has spiritual and psychological impacts. He said that you cannot separate a man’s inner world from his material experience. If a man can sustain his family, he can also re-cement his identity in the daily preoccupation of work. However, according to Otoa, that does not mean that the needs of the Langi people can be satisfied simply by material support, largely because the Langi people are operating at such a spiritual deficit. The basic spiritual needs of the people must be addressed, he said, before they can move forward. That is why a successful transitional justice program must include symbolic rites that will satisfy the people psychologically and spiritually.

A critical first step, in Otoa’s view, would be redressing the wrong done to the dead at Barlonyo. The mass burial of the dead at Barlonyo “ran

against our ways,” he said. Otoa acknowledged that the circumstances were difficult, but also that the dead must be accorded proper respect so the living can move on. “The Langi,” he said, “are very particular about the burial of their dead.”⁵³

Rites Owed to the Dead

Rooted in a long-standing practice of ancestor reverence, the Langi believe the living have profound responsibilities with regard to the dead. The trauma of losing a loved one is ritualistically addressed through rites of mourning and burial. While many traditional practices have been necessarily abbreviated due to insecurity and a lack of resources, the essential requirements remain. When even the most basic rites are not performed, the spiritual and psychological consequences can be profound.⁵⁴ Historically, burial rites among the Langi were extended affairs, with specific prescriptions. An overview of the traditional funeral is presented in this section to contextualize, within Langi cultural practice, the cultural disjuncture caused by the massacre and subsequent mass burial.

Traditional Practice

Historically, mourning among the Langi was marked by two distinct stages. The first stage began at the moment of death. The family would send word to distant relations. Attending the funeral was a family obligation among the Langi, and failing to attend was a sign of disrespect for the dead.⁵⁵ In Van Gennep’s phrasing, the mourners would separate from their society to enter a period of mourning, during which rites of transition linked them with the dead. For example, the heads of both the dead person and the living mourners were shaved, and the hair, at the time of burial, would be thrown on the grave.⁵⁶

Traditional burials prescribed that the body of the dead be buried at the family home. Critically, only one body was allowed per grave. Burying more than one person in a grave was highly taboo. (Indeed, if a pregnant woman died, the fetus would be removed and buried separately.) Males were buried on the right-hand side of the entrance to the house; females on the left side. The body was

buried so that the head rested east, in the direction of the sunrise. A male was buried on his right side, a female on her left. According to Hayley, the dead one was buried facing the village; if he faced the bush, it was believed that his *tipo* would bring sickness to his family. Driberg wrote that the legs of the dead were bent, with the knees brought as close to the chest as possible, and the hands were brought to rest under the cheek.⁵⁷ The eyes were closed and the ears were sealed with the leaves from the *ochoga* tree. The act of burying the dead was considered too painful for the family; accordingly, an outsider typically performed the service.⁵⁸ After the corpse was buried, a chicken was held over the grave and beaten to death. A sheep was also slaughtered and its intestines thrown on top of the grave. A feast (*achuban*) followed the burial. Prior to eating, those in attendance recounted the life and deeds of the dead person. The *achuban* concluded the first stage of mourning.⁵⁹

The next stage of ceremonies was held during the following harvest to celebrate the “feast of the undoing of the string” (*apuny me gonyo tol*). Between the *achuban* and the *apuny*, men kept their heads shaved, though women grew their hair again. However, on the day of the *apuny*, everyone shaved their heads again. Everyone attending the *apuny* contributed to the feast. Ideally, goats were slaughtered, as well as a bull.⁶⁰ Beer played an important role in the *apuny*. However, it was critical that millet grown by the deceased *not* be used to make the sorghum beer that was consumed. Therefore, the living grew a new crop of millet. This would account for the timing of the *apuny*, which would vary to allow a new crop of millet to be grown and harvested.⁶¹ Depending on the time of the year that the deceased passed, the *apuny* might have taken place four months to over a year after the *achuban*. According to Driberg, a lump of dry beer dough would be thrown onto the grave at the *apuny* as an offering to the deceased. According to a number of informants, beer was poured directly on the grave.

During the *apuny*, the heir of the deceased would be selected. If a man, his property and surviving wives would be apportioned in accordance with customs of inheritance. Then the senior member of the clan would deliver a funeral oration that both

praised the dead and called on the successor to be worthy of his memory. In contrast to the *achuban*, the *apuny* was a joyous celebration – the closing of the period of mourning – and was characterized by singing and dancing that lasted up to two nights.

Contemporary Practice

Full burial rites are virtually never performed in Lango today. According to informants, they have largely dispensed with the *apuny*. The shaving of the head is rarely practiced as a form of mourning, though it is now a common style in Uganda. Inheriting wives infrequently occurs, partly due to fear of HIV. (According to one informant, “Now people say, ‘Don’t touch! You don’t know what killed your brother!’”)⁶² As noted above, Christianity’s rise resulted in the abandonment of a number of traditional practices. Now Christian officiates, rather than traditional leaders, generally conduct the funeral. The head of the deceased is no longer shaved, nor are the knees bent up against the body. The ritualized status of beer has been dropped. Animals are generally not sacrificed, nor is their blood poured on the grave.

Nevertheless, based on informant interviews, the basic communal functions of the funeral continue to be practiced.⁶³ This includes the coming together of family members; the slaughter of animals and preparation of a feast; the recounting of the dead one’s life; and a period of mourning. In current practice, when a person dies, the body should be washed. The body should rest in his or her parents’ house for at least a night, followed by a viewing. The length of time that the dead rests in the house will depend on how long it takes for relatives to gather for the *achuban*. A proper grave should be dug on the land of their ancestral home. Many of those interviewed stressed the importance of this. The location of the grave is a point of reference for the dead, but also for the living. The grave is a source of comfort.

It remains highly taboo to bury more than one person in a grave. This universally leads to mental anguish for the living, and unhappiness for the deceased.⁶⁴ (The importance of this taboo has been reinterpreted, in the Christian context, as a

right given by God.) The body should be placed in a white burial cloth, and then in a coffin. There should be a funeral ceremony in which people pray. The leadership of the prayers would depend on what church the deceased attended. The grave should be sealed with concrete, in order to keep away animals. Afterward, those in attendance should gather for a feast to give testimony of the person’s life. People should have the opportunity to talk about the person in order to expunge their memory. This feast has combined characteristics of the *achuban* and the *apuny*, in that it both opens and closes the period of mourning. In discussing the dead, those in attendance acknowledge both the good and bad. The event should be a cathartic experience.

Given the economic circumstances of most people in Lango, the feast is now much more modest than those once practiced. Bulls are no longer slaughtered, but a goat should be, the meat supplemented with beans and cassava. People eat, drink, and go home, having done their best to honor the dead and move on with their own lives.⁶⁵

Informants were pragmatic about their mourning. In contrast to burials of the past, which could last months, today the requisite ceremonies can be finished in a few hours.⁶⁶

The funeral was described as a service to both the dead and the living. According to Achan Molly, “If you see the grave of the person, you know they are dead and are not coming back. This is important.”⁶⁷ The concern seems, in part, a fear that the dead will return, but also a means of accepting the death of a loved one and being able to move on. Burial rites must thus be understood to function as both spiritual and therapeutic experiences. “We believe the corpse is dead but living because the spirit is still living,” said Reverend George. “We must respect the body. It must be washed, dressed, and preferably smeared with shea oil as a sign of respect. If we don’t do this, we’ll be troubled by the spirits of the dead. A goat, cow, or sheep must be prepared to feed the mourners, but it is also prepared for the dead because the living and the dead are one, otherwise the dead will torment the living.”⁶⁸ According to Jimmy Agang Okello, a reverend in the Church of Uganda, the failure to accord the

deceased a proper funeral is a profound insult to the dead. “When you die and you’re not accorded a proper burial, people believe you’re thrown away like a dog,” Jimmy said, “That’s what’s in people’s minds – terrible guilt. It’s very tormenting.”⁶⁹

Nevertheless, though many of the survivors have been unable to access the bodies of the dead, memorial services have in some cases been held. This is not considered as efficacious as a traditional burial, with a body, but some informants have adapted practices to attempt to satisfy their obligations to the dead. When the body cannot be found or retrieved, a memorial may still be held, though the accommodations varied from family to family. According to some, the possessions of the dead would be buried, and their spirit asked for forgiveness for failing to bury them with appropriate rites.⁷⁰ According to others, a grave would be dug and filled in, prayers offered, and two stones, approximately fist-sized, would be taken from the dead one’s family home. The stones would be blessed and placed on the grave.⁷¹ According to most informants, flowers would be brought, and some kind of monument established to mark the grave. Afterward, those attending the funeral would eat and talk about the life of the dead. If an angry ghost was believed to be haunting the living, such an offering may stop the trouble.⁷²

One informant’s story was emblematic. Ajok Florence, a thirty-five-year-old woman and self-declared Protestant, was in Barlonyo at the time of the attack. She was hiding in a house that the attackers lit on fire. An ember fell on her. The skin on the back of her head is badly scarred and she wears a scarf to conceal it. She lost her mother, her sister, and her sister’s child in the attack. All were buried in the mass grave, but she had the resources to hold a memorial service for each at home. She described the preparations and ceremony in detail:

We removed seven goats and slaughtered and cooked them. We had a bag of sugar, three basins of beans, a sack of maize flour, cooking oil, onions. People spent two nights. Some came from Agweng, Acholiland, a long ways. People came to console me, so I had to take care of them. We dug three graves. We placed a cloth inside to act as a body, and we buried each cloth. A flower was placed on top of each grave, and many flowers were placed

around the grave. A cross was placed on each grave. We prayed at those graves.

A Protestant leader led the prayers. According to Florence, the memorial service helped. She suffered less anxiety, and fewer bad dreams. She said she found it easier to move on with her life. Nevertheless, it was far from a perfect solution. Florence said that it would be better if she had been able to bury the bodies. “Occasionally I still suffer from dreams that they are unhappy,” she said. “They don’t want to be in the mass grave.”⁷³

In summary, the importance of a proper burial for the Langi cannot be overstated. Though mourning practices have been abbreviated, informants stressed the continuity between historical practice and contemporary preferences. The mass grave at Barlonyo, whatever its justifications, must therefore be seen as a stark violation of mourning and burial as long practiced by the Langi. “An individual burial gives people honor,” said Reverend George Okello Otim. “We’re not animals to be packed into one spot. We should push the government for decent burials. They should be given individual burials.”⁷⁴ Similarly, Tony Otoa told me there is no doubt the mass grave at Barlonyo contradicts the Langi way, and that is why people still suffer. “We must remember the dead in order to move on,” Tony said. “Proper funeral rites would atone for what has happened and give us strength to move forward.”⁷⁵

When the living fail to perform the necessary rites owed to the dead, as was the case at Barlonyo, the spiritual and psychological repercussions can be severe.

Consequences of Failure to Perform Last Rites

In Barlonyo, hauntings were commonly reported both by my informants and by nearly every household in the representative survey.⁷⁶ Most informants spoke of the presence of unhappy *tipo*, manifesting in dreams and occasionally as chronic physical pain.⁷⁷ If a body is not properly buried, if the funeral rites are not appropriately observed, many informants believed that the spirit would come back to haunt the closest living relative – the one

who should be responsible.⁷⁸ “When someone dies and he’s not buried properly, the spirit will torment the relatives,” said Revered Jimmy Aagang Okello. “It is very common. This is what gives us headaches as spiritual leaders.”⁷⁹

Many informants discussed the physical and psychological effects of hauntings. Ayugi Aida has a small garden of beans near the center of Barlonyo. Three weeks before I interviewed her, an ox plow turned up some human bones and rotted clothing. “Finding the body is a bad omen,” she said. “I think I have pain because of the body found in the garden, because just then I started feeling the body pains.”⁸⁰ Aida was unclear if her pains were caused by the spirit of the dead, or from breathing in ash from when the bones were unearthed.⁸¹ Regardless, the contamination seemed more than simply biological. To address her pain, Aida believed the body needed to be removed, properly buried, and prayers said over her garden. This was not the first time she had discovered remains. Another set of bones had been found in the garden five months earlier. She had asked another villager to help her by removing the bones. In a move that seemed to contradict her current prescription of prayers and burial, she said the bones were thrown in a nearby latrine and covered up. I wondered why the remains had not been buried. Aida shrugged, saying that the bones were placed in the toilet because it was nearby and easy.⁸² The apparent contradiction speaks to the ambivalence common among informants, who recognize the supreme importance of burial and yet have been forced by circumstance, lack of resources, and simple exhaustion to accept short cuts.

Informants commonly reported the pairing of physical pain with mental anguish. Ogwari Geoffrey, who lost two children in the attack, says that he experiences pain in his head and chest after suffering nightmares about those he lost. “I dream about the people that we lost,” he said. “I see the picture of the dead coming back to me. My children appear in the doorway, with other people standing behind them, but no one says anything. The pain comes after the nightmares.”⁸³ He had been going to the hospital to receive “injections” to help with the pain, but was unsure of what exactly the injections contained. Ongom Richard, a four-

teen-year-old who lost both of his parents in the attack, and was studying in a local primary school, said he suffered recurrent dreams of his family being abducted by the LRA, taken to the bush, and killed. “The spirits,” he said, “come in the form of a disease, at the neck.” He pointed at his throat. “It feels like someone is strangling me.”⁸⁴

Akong Esther, a cheerful woman who lost her husband and son in the attack, managed to hide from the attackers when they entered Barlonyo. Her husband, who had been sweeping in the church, was shot, and her co-wife and ten-year-old son were abducted. The co-wife was killed, but the child has never been found. Their house was looted and burned, and their goats were killed. “I had a dream once where my husband came and called my name twice,” she said. “He said that the goats the rebels had killed were alive again, and I started seeing the goats in my dreams as spirits. I never saw my husband again.” She said that in another dream, her son came to her door, saying, “Mommy, it’s me, come and open the door,” and “Mommy, you’re still sleeping. The rebels have come.”⁸⁵ When Esther awoke, she began to pray. She believed her child was dead. When the dreams first occurred, she developed rashes all over her body, and deafness in her left ear. While the rashes have since disappeared, she still couldn’t hear out of her left ear.

In spite of the depreciation of cultural institutions, burial requirements were universally viewed as critical to honoring the dead and allowing survivors to grieve. These basic rites include burial on family land, honoring the one person-one grave taboo, and the funerary feast that binds the family together after loss. Informants told me that when these basic rites are not observed, as they were not in Barlonyo, the result is prolonged mental and spiritual anguish.

The Debate over Exhumation and Reburial

Nevertheless, while the mass grave contravened basic cultural expectations and was a painful reminder of the wrongs done to the dead, in Barlonyo the debate over exhumation and reburial was divisive. Two parties on the issue emerged. A small but

vocal minority, which included village and church leaders, tended to argue that exhumation would be a traumatic and unnecessary event, one that would rupture, rather than repair, the Barlonyo community. Among the general village populace, however, and particularly among those who identify more closely with traditional beliefs, exhumation and reburial were overwhelmingly seen as necessary. The stances of these two groups are considered more fully below.

Supporting Exhumation and Reburial

The representative survey of victims of the Barlonyo massacre found that 75 percent of households had a family member killed that day. Of these households, 94 percent supported the proper reburial of the dead, many of whom are located in the mass grave.⁸⁶ For reasons noted in the previous section, mass burial contradicted their wishes and cultural practices. “Mass graves are not acceptable,” Oliwit George told me. A medical doctor in Lira and respected cultural leader, George is currently writing a study of Lango cultural beliefs as they relate to health. “[Burying one person to a grave] is a tradition and it is demanded by us. It is foregone. I have just reburied my brother, after six years, and my uncle and his wife.” Nevertheless, the process is fraught. George said consequences for getting reburial wrong are severe:

When I went to look for remains, I was advised against bringing remains home, because I might be bringing the remains of a different person. And the person would cry “Why did you bring me here?” That person will go on disturbing you in dreams. I’ve been having bad dreams. My late wife, my late sisters were all around me, praying for me. And I got up in that dream and asked for a blanket. I was feeling so cold. When you interpret the dream and its meanings, we have to hold a memorial service for my late wife. She went away disappointed. And my sisters. No matter how much time has passed, a memorial service is always timely – it is never too late!⁸⁷

“You must do all you can to appease the dead,” George said, “There is no statute of limitations on how long they will plague the living.” The need for appeasement “stretches back,” he said, “it can even go to another generation.”⁸⁸ As a doctor, George is

ambivalent about the causes of his dream, admitting that it might have resulted from stress or exhaustion rather than angry spirits. Regardless, he believes the prescription is unambiguous. Among Langis, he said, a failure to perform necessary rituals for the dead will have long-standing psychological and spiritual repercussions.

This view was reflected by the majority of informants in Barlonyo. Achen Harriet lost five children in the attack. Her husband was shot. His body was burned in their house, along with the children. She came back the next day to find them. She said that she suffers chest pains and bad dreams, because her family was buried in the mass grave. In her dreams, her burned children come to her and tell her they don’t want to be buried in the mass grave, with the others. “The mass grave wasn’t right,” she said. “It’s in the people’s interest that (the dead) should be buried right.”⁸⁹ Ayugi Aida says that exhumation and reburial would be “very good.” According to Aida, the mass grave is not okay because “it is against the law for two people to be buried in one place. Because of religious law. Even world law. God made a grave for one person only. Even your own child, you don’t go in the same grave.”⁹⁰ Odongo Yuventino was tending to grazing cattle when the LRA attacked. He hid in the tall grass and in a copse of trees before running, zigzag, through the fields, receiving a shot in the leg, making it to Kon Ogur for medical treatment. He returned to Barlonyo to find his wife beaten to death, his daughter bayoneted through the skull. Everything he possessed had been stolen. He quickly buried his wife and daughter, but subsequently an order came from the military to exhume all bodies that had been buried and to place them in the mass grave. “It was not good,” he said. “They had already been buried and they should have stayed there. Removing them was not good. . . . In Lango culture, when somebody dies, the body must be buried in front of the home.”⁹¹ Apet Rhoda, a young woman with an eighteen-month-old baby, was shot several times and lost a thumb in the attack. She said the burial of her mother, brother, and brother’s child in the mass grave is not okay.⁹² Ochen Martin, whose parents were shot and hacked to death with a panga (machete) and whose sister’s head was beaten in by the attackers, believes that the dead must be

exhumed and reburied, if possible, and he frames the issue as one of responsibility to those who have died. “I could not refuse it,” he said, “because I was produced through them.”⁹³ Achan Molly, who lost a co-wife and four children in the attack, has a long bayonet scar on her forearm. “The mass grave is not right,” she said. “People should have been buried in individual graves.”⁹⁴ Auma Elizabeth, whose husband and one of her children are in the mass grave, wants the bodies removed and reburied. “They were just thrown away, and now the world is spoiled,” she said, with a wave of her hand. “I want a traditional burial, and a prayer for their souls.”⁹⁵

For many, the question hinged on identification. If it were possible to identify the bodies, they said, and if the resources were made available to properly rebury, that would be preferable to leaving them in the mass grave. Many were admittedly skeptical that identification was possible, even as they wished that their dead could be removed from that taboo ground. This view was articulated by Okello Tom, a thirty-eight-year-old who lost two young children in the attack. “Because there was a lot of fear (after the attack), everyone hurried. They buried the dead quickly and prayers were said for everyone,” he said. “It was hard. It wasn’t good.” According to Tom, if it were possible to identify the bodies, “they should be reburied.”⁹⁶ Alele Grace, who has lived in Barlonyo since the time of war, and lost her son and daughter-in-law during the attack, believes that exhumation and reburial would be appropriate if the bodies could be identified.⁹⁷ Olaga Tom, whose mother was burned alive in the attack, said if the bodies could be identified, most of the village would want reburial because those in the mass grave “are not respected.” “People sit on them,” he said, pointing towards the grave, where a group of boys kicked a ball. “Cows cross over them, dogs dig there. In the culture of Lango, graves are supposed to be respected.”⁹⁸

Regional religious and cultural leaders who were interviewed for this study supported reburial, though only in the event that the dead could be identified. Bishop Kami was in Barlonyo on the day after the attack. He saw the conditions of the mutilated and burned bodies. Dogs ghoulishly wandered the streets. Even then, he said, it would have been dif-

ficult to identify many of the bodies. “Culturally, people believe that (exhumation) should be done,” he said. “The challenge is that people were torn apart. How will you identify? Still, it would be normal and natural to exhume and rebury.”⁹⁹ According to Reverend George, if a deceased person can be identified, there is no question that one must:

exhume the body! The living relatives must be informed. Friends and family should come to the exhumation. A coffin should be availed. The body should be taken to the family’s land. If [the dead is] a confessing Christian, the church is called to organize a prayer. Counselors are necessary to guide the living. And then life can continue.¹⁰⁰

Opposing Exhumation and Reburial

A small minority (6 percent) of households opposed reburial.¹⁰¹ However, this opposition was generally not absolute. Even those who opposed reburial universally believed that the mass grave contravened the wishes of the community; however, given the circumstances after the attack, it was accepted as a *fait accompli*. Adongo Janet, Okao’s surviving wife, was ambivalent on the issue of her husband’s reburial. “The mass grave was not right,” she said. “But there was nothing that could have been done. The people had fled.” For Janet, the best thing to be done for the mass grave is to renovate the site and build a proper memorial “so that our grandchildren can go and learn what happened.”¹⁰²

Three concerns about reburial were apparent. The first was the anxiety about re-traumatizing the community by exhuming the dead. This view was particularly prevalent among those villagers who participated directly in burying bodies in the mass grave. Given the condition of the bodies upon burial, these informants were traumatized by the experience and would understandably resist repeating it. For example, Alele Stella was shot in the leg during the attack, but managed to crawl to safety, and was then taken to the main hospital in Lira. In spite of her wound, she came back to Barlonyo so she could assist with burying the bodies in the mass grave. Given the circumstances, she said that everything was done properly. “If you remove (the bodies),” she said, “it is just going to increase the

people's pain and anxiety."¹⁰³ Olaga Charles was a young man at the time of the attack. He was serving with the Amuka militia, but was away at Kohn-Ogur at the time of the attack. When he and other militia members returned the next day, they assisted with burying the bodies at the mass grave, without prayers or ceremony. Charles suffered bad dreams for weeks afterward. "I would see those who we'd buried, and they would say, 'You have abandoned us,'" he said. "The mass grave wasn't right." However, he worried that any kind of exhumation would re-traumatize survivors.¹⁰⁴ "It was so horrible," Charles said. "Babies had been cut out of mothers' wombs and tossed onto fires."¹⁰⁵

Second, as noted earlier, many refused to believe that the dead in the mass grave could be identified. Ayugi Aida's sister, Okii Anna, saw her husband decapitated by the LRA but was herself inexplicably spared. Anna did not believe that the bodies could be identified. Consequently, she felt that the only proper thing to do was to improve the mass grave. "It should be made nicer than it is," she said. "It should be re-cemented, and fenced. There should be flowers. There should be a better plaque, so the children don't forget."¹⁰⁶ She said there should be a commemoration of the dead, and a public prayer by a religious leader. The dead, however, should be left as they are.

Third, many fear that resources will be redirected to exhumation and reburial, whereas the living are in dire need. The severe impoverishment of Barlonyo has resulted in understandable prioritizations. Feeding one's family, or paying for school fees, has taken precedence over holding proper commemorative rites for the dead or even fulfilling the material obligations of rites for the living, such as marriage. This is why many worry about exhumation, which would consume resources that the living badly need for themselves and their children. For people like Odongo Yuventino, the trauma of the attack is linked to ongoing financial insecurity, which in turn prolongs the mental and emotional distress. Everything Yuventino owned was destroyed or taken during the attack, and he never recovered the resources necessary to hold a memorial service for his dead wife and child. His surviving children's school costs are too high. He simply can-

not get ahead. His failure to properly memorialize his dead loved ones resulted in high blood pressure, stress, bad dreams.¹⁰⁷ Financial impoverishment required many Langis, like Yuventino, to make a hard choice. As long as the people of Barlonyo lack the necessities to survive and provide a future for their children, some will oppose a process of exhumation and reburial if it is seen as undermining the future.

Possibly the most influential opponent of reburial in Barlonyo is the village leader, Ogwang Moses. Moses was also the elected representative of the IDPs who had encamped at Barlonyo. After narrowly surviving the massacre, Moses helped dig the mass grave and bury the dead. Like other informants, he is anxious to move forward by resolving the past, and ensure a prosperous future for survivors. Moses advocates leaving the bodies where they are, and instead renovating the grave. Exhumation and reburial, he thinks, would be too difficult for the community; he also worried about the complication of identifying remains. "You could not figure out who is who," he said.¹⁰⁸

Because of the expense and technical expertise required to identify the bodies, at present there is no plan by community leaders to exhume and rebury. The goal instead is to renovate the grave and build an education center where tourists and community members can learn about the massacre. This is the view of one of Barlonyo's young leaders: Quinto Okello, the 33-year-old general secretary of the newly founded Barlonyo Memorial Community Association. "Some places are sacred and must be preserved," Quinto said. He told me that the site of massacre needed to be preserved, and a proper memorial established.¹⁰⁹ He described in detail plans for an extensive learning center to be built at the site of the mass grave (though the sources of funding remained ambiguous). The example of Rwanda loomed large in our discussion. Following the Rwandan Genocide, human remains were put on display, ostensibly to prove beyond a doubt what had happened. Quinto, and a number of other village leaders, have based their memorialization plans on this example. He told me that the bodies in the mass grave should be kept there. However, other remains that are discovered – like the bones in Ayugi

Aida's garden – should be exhibited. “[T]here are people who need to see physical evidence,” he said. “Like in Rwanda, where people can see the bones of those who died so [visitors] can learn.”¹¹⁰ Such a display, Quinto believed, would attract tourism to Barlonyo, providing a necessary economic lifeline to the village.¹¹¹

However, even among informants opposed to exhumation and reburial, only a tiny minority advocated the display of human remains. It is a position at odds with cultural beliefs surrounding treatment of the dead. “Right now, when you go [to Barlonyo], you feel death,” Okoch Ferdinand told me. “Putting bodies on display would only make that worse.” A district councilor in Ogur at the time of the attack, Ferdinand said that displaying remains would be both disrespectful and spiritually harmful. Many informants expressed this view. “When you’re displaying the bodies, you’re making the tragedy real and present,” he said. “We bury people with proper funerals so that we can move on.”¹¹² Nevertheless, the fact that the notion has gained some traction among Barlonyo’s leaders speaks to the community’s struggle to navigate unprecedented challenges in the midst of financial and social insecurity.

Most informants in Barlonyo interviewed for this study believed that the goal should be to commemorate the dead with honor, while reknitting the community and creating opportunity for those still alive. Most rejected the idea of commercializing the massacre site as some kind of tourist destination simply to raise money for survivors. Nevertheless, a majority of informants believed that the best way to address the trauma of the Barlonyo attack (beyond exhumation, identification, and reburial) was to build a connection between Barlonyo and the rest of the world. “Barlonyo should be a social and educational experience,” said Abu Vigilio, a Ugandan educated in the United States. “The emphasis should be on rehabilitation and education.”¹¹³

To that end, a majority of informants advocated for a “living memorial” to be built at the site – perhaps a school or retreat center – that would preserve the dignity of those who died, educate future generations, while also adding value to the place and helping people move on.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Death, Burial, and Reparation in Lango

Walking Barlonyo’s dusty paths, past a broken borehole or a field of beans ravaged by a freak summer hailstorm, it was painful to think that the village’s name translates as “the source of wealth.” Once prosperous, perhaps Barlonyo could be again. Yet what struck me, in repeated conversations with victims and their families, is that the trauma haunting the village goes beyond mere impoverishment. Rather, poverty is tied to spiritual and psychological enervation, to physical, spiritual and emotional wounds that have never healed. Economic underdevelopment and spiritual and emotional distress are problems with similar roots, and are mutually reinforcing. In one way or another, virtually everyone I spoke with believes that Barlonyo’s rejuvenation is tied to addressing the emptiness left by the massacre and the inappropriate treatment of those who died.

Any reparations programming in Barlonyo – and generally in Lango – should take into account shifting cultural dynamics.

As mentioned throughout this report, the cultural system in Lango is highly dynamic and characterized, in recent years, by a dramatic decline of cultural institutions. To some extent, this vacuum has been filled by religious actors; namely, the Christian churches. However, most informants, including many prominent religious leaders, believe that rejuvenated cultural institutions will be a key to ensuring future prosperity for Lango. While the likelihood, or manner, of this rejuvenation goes far beyond the scope of this report, it is recommended that any transitional justice programming in Barlonyo take into account the cultural context, and the potential consequences – anticipated and otherwise – that might result from future reparations policies.

It should also be noted that while most informants (especially the older generation) longed for a time in which clan-based traditional institutions were strong, such institutions are double-edged. They would likely emphasize male-centered hierarchies and households at a time when many households

are headed by women. Cultural institutions, even if they were to make a comeback, would presumably need to evolve to accommodate a much different social landscape.

A vast majority (96 percent) of victims of the Barlonyo massacre support exhumation and reburial according to some abbreviated cultural ceremony.¹¹⁴

Traditional cultural mechanisms are necessary to assist the people of Lango in addressing the deep psychic and social wounds that persist in the aftermath of the 2004 tragedy. The trauma of the attack, and the compromise of mass burial, deeply offended traditional beliefs surrounding the treatment of the dead, a fact that continues to plague survivors. While cultural practices have been in decline, they are still honored – in some shape or form – by the vast majority of adults in the community. A majority of informants demanded that the dead be properly buried at the family home, in individual graves, and that a funerary feast be held for the family. According to individual family preferences, the funeral ceremony should be led by religious or cultural leaders, or a combination. Until these basic requirements are met, until the violence and harm has been ritualistically addressed, the majority of survivors will not be able to move on.

An exhumation and reburial program, if it were to be pursued, must include (and account for) the full costs of necessary funerals.

As noted above, traditional burial is a complicated social ritual. Whereas a Langi funeral was historically a months-long, resource-intensive process that brought the family together in highly prescribed periods of mourning and release, even the abbreviated modern example prescribes the fulfillment of important social functions that center on the funerary feast. Consequently, any reparations aid that focuses on the exhumation, identification and reburial would require the material assistance necessary to bring potentially dispersed family members together for a modest feast in which they can commemorate the one(s) who died. Informants said the food necessary for such a meal would be simple: beans, cassava, and a slaughtered animal, a cow preferably, or a goat.

Program design should be taken in consultation with a wide-ranging number of people in Barlonyo, not just the leadership.

Extensive interviews done throughout Barlonyo suggested that a possible disconnect exists between the village leadership and their constituency. The leaders believe that exhumation and reburial is a policy that the populace does not want. The leadership has adopted this position for sensible reasons: in addition to skepticism about identification, they worry that exhumation would re-traumatize the community, amounting to a severe psychosocial setback. Furthermore, the leadership seems to be beguiled by the memorialization example set by Rwanda. One of the village leaders of Barlonyo, supported by GoU funds, visited a Rwanda mass grave and memorial where the dead had not been exhumed. This appeared to have been the example on which village leaders have modeled plans.

This is not to suggest that the leadership is actively attempting to manipulate the villagers, or that they are ignoring the wishes of the broader community. It seems instead that the village leaders have operated on a set of assumptions about what is best for the village, for victims and victims' families. Any program designed in collaboration with the village leadership alone might be a distortion of survivors' wishes. An exhumation and reburial program would thus require fostering an active conversation among villagers and their leaders to discuss priorities and ways forward.

Building community consensus on exhumation and reburial requires educating survivors on the possibilities of identification.

Virtually all of those who opposed exhumation and reburial did so on the grounds of identification, believing that it would be impossible to tell who was who. This is a critical point for many informants, since they believed that making an error – i.e., burying the wrong person in the wrong family grave – carried highly negative spiritual repercussions. Thus, before any kind of exhumation and reburial process could be initiated, villagers would need to be educated on the potential of anthropological forensics to identify the dead.¹¹⁵ Only then could they make an informed choice.

Any process of exhumation is bound to carry deep psychosocial risks.

A small minority of those opposed to exhumation opposed it solely on the grounds that it would re-traumatize the community. To some extent, this would be inevitable and in line with traditional expectations. Many Langis believe that one must go through the pain of burial and mourning in order to properly move on following the death of a loved one. Pain is part of the process. However, the scale of reburial required by Barlonyo is unprecedented for the Langis. Furthermore, traditional mechanisms for navigating periods of mourning have been so undermined that they will not be able to provide the kinds of support that previous generations enjoyed. Any exhumation and reburial program will require extensive mediation. Many informants expressed a desire, at the present time, for counseling and psychosocial support to help them deal with everything that has transpired. A responsible exhumation and reburial program should be complemented by the development of a long-term counseling and psychosocial resource that will assist the living as they properly grieve, after a long and painful deferment, as well as to prepare for a new future.

A program of exhumation and reburial should be not be seen by community members as harming their long-term economic prospects.

Some in Barlonyo, rightly or wrongly, believe that a mass grave provides a financial opportunity for the community. This informs the emphasis, among many of the leadership, for a memorial center that will attract outsiders and create incomes for village residents. In a perverse fashion, the mass grave is a community asset. An exhumation and reburial program would likely bump up against the parochial interests of the village leadership, which is anxious to safeguard any potential way of alleviating the community's impoverishment. After all, the people of Barlonyo worry not only about those who have died; they have the living to think about. Consequently, an exhumation and reburial process will be most successful if it is paired with a living memorial – a school, or cultural center – that captures the story of the massacre, educates those who wish to learn from the past, and perpetually honors the dead.

Endnotes

1. There is an extensive cross-disciplinary literature on grief, bereavement, and the importance of mourning to individuals and communities. For examples, see Stroebe et al. (2008); Center for the Advancement of Health (2004) Fowlkes (1990); Doka (1989); Raphael (1984); Rosenblatt, Walsh, & Jackson (1976). For a cross-cultural discussion of the role of ritual in allowing mourners to transition into, and out of, grieving processes, see van Gennep (1960).
 2. A/RES/60/147.
 3. To the extent possible, reparations seek to restore victims to the status they held prior to the violation (*status quo ante*). However, this is not always practicable. In cases of grave trauma, no amount of reparation – either material or symbolic – can make up for harms done. Nevertheless, reparations seek to shore up, through individual and collective means, communities that have suffered from grave violations and crimes. The goal is not simply individual legal redress, but the restoration of community. In a post-conflict environment, reparations are, as De Greiff (2006) argues, a political project: “in transitional periods reparations seek, in the last analysis, as most transitional measures do, to contribute (modestly) to the reconstitution or the constitution of a new political community” (454).
 4. The results of the Barlonyo survey will be published separately in a forthcoming publication, Dyan Mazurana, Teddy Atim and Jeremy Harkey, “*Show No Mercy: The Massacre at Barlonyo*,” Uganda, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.
 5. The attack on Barlonyo was in part an act of vengeance. Odhiambo’s predecessor, Tabuley, had been killed by Langi militia members during action in the Teso sub-region.
 6. Justice and Reconciliation Project (2009). “Kill Every Living Thing.” Gulu District NGO Forum, Field Note IX, February.
 7. A young man, age: about 25, 2/16/2012, interviewed by Dyan Mazurana, Lira, Uganda.
 8. Interview with X, 6/22/11, interviewed by Dyan Mazurana, outside Barlonyo, Uganda. The light defenses at the Barlonyo camp were perplexing to many respondents, and contributed to a general suspicion that the Government of Uganda had little interest in protecting the IDP camp. Barlonyo was located on the outer perimeter of territory securely held by the Government, and there had been widespread reports that the LRA was active in the area.
 9. Oti Michael, male, age: 37, 7/27/11, Barlonyo, Uganda. *With the exception of leaders acting in their public roles, all names have been changed to protect the identity of victims.*
 10. Abu Vigilio, male, age: 40, 6/28/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda
 11. Alelle Stella, female, age: 58, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 12. Odongo Yuventino, male, age: 47, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda
 13. Mazurana et al. (forthcoming).
 14. Abu Vigilio (6/28/2011) described the events at the ceremony: “The bishops of Lira were there, senior representatives from Kampala, and Muslim leaders. Government leaders were there, including Museveni, and senior military people. Representatives from NGOs, and UN agencies. Speeches were made. Museveni promised to rehabilitate the place. He promised to build a technical school and institute. To build a bridge across the river. He apologized for the military’s laxity and promised redeployments. Nothing serious has come of (these promises).”
- As noted, in Lango there persists a great deal of suspicion about the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government. Nearly everyone I spoke with believed that the Government allowed the attack to occur. According to a popular narrative, after Museveni came to power, he sought to punish Obote’s people in retaliation for the Bush War. Faced with the overwhelming power of the Government, the Langi strategy was submission. They wanted avoid giving the Government an excuse to crack down. LRA aggressions provided the NRM Government with a political instrument, they said, allowing Museveni to position himself as the only one capable of “managing the killers.” Disruptions in the North provided an ongoing emergency that shored up support for Museveni at the polls, and assisted him in gaining international aid. While many informants do not believe that the government perpetrated the attack on Barlonyo, they do feel that the massacre fit into a larger political program of using the threat of the LRA to coerce and intimidate the NRM’s rivals. According to several people I interviewed, Lango’s passivity vis-à-vis the Government may have encouraged the LRA to target the district.
15. Justin Okabo, male, age: 37, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 16. Hayley (1947) discusses this in the context of the British colonial administration, which introduced many of these changes in Lango, acting directly or indirectly to subvert the authority of traditional leaders.
 17. Hansen (1984).
 18. Adong Helena, female, age: 71, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 19. Achan Molly, female, age: 45, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda. The apparent opposition between traditional practices and Christian teaching may be somewhat misleading, in part because such an opposition assumes that “tradition” and “Christianity” occupy similar conceptual spaces. While it is common for Westerners to associate indigenous beliefs with “religion”, the terminology and understanding of religion – as a discrete social category – is a European creation, a point made repeatedly throughout the literature. For examples, see Byrne (1997) and Asad (1993). Like many other African peoples, historically the Langi did not believe in a separation between spiritual beliefs and other spheres of life. By extension, the privatization of religion – to invert Casanova’s term – had never occurred. Instead, cultural beliefs about a transcendent reality permeated social life, community structure, politics, processes of inheritance, and so forth. Traditional beliefs infused and informed a worldview that was all-encompassing.

- ing, as opposed to a European view of religion as a distinct social space.
20. By contrast, in traditional burials, as will be discussed below, once the body has been buried a goat would be slaughtered and its intestines placed on the grave – this time by the left hand, suggesting that norms and practices of cleanliness informed ritualistic significance.
 21. Acts of the Apostles 3:7-10.
 22. See Driberg (1923); Hayley (1947); Asante and Mazama (2009). While omnipresent, hills seem to have been places of particular importance to the *Jok* – and given the entity’s at-times capricious nature, this is one reason why villages were never founded on hilltops.
 23. Hayley (1947).
 24. The extent to which these aspects inform Langi perspectives on the Catholic Trinity was not a part of this study, though the author finds it an interesting question.
 25. According to Hayley (1947), the Christian God was differentiated from the *Jok*, and was referred to as *Obanga*. No Langis interviewed for this report made this distinction. Potentially this is a regional distinction, or one that has evolved over time.
 26. E.g., I observed a woman attempting to cure her child’s malaria. She laid her right hand on the child’s forehead and offered up the following prayer:

We curse you in Jesus’ name
All demons of sickness, we curse in Jesus’ name.
If you are a demon of malaria, we curse in Jesus’ name.
Leave us in peace, we’ve done nothing wrong!

 In her prayer, which she recited with some variation many times, the mother used both *Jok* and the word *Citan* to describe the demons or devils of malaria.
 27. The extent to which demonization of tradition by early missionaries is responsible for this rather Manichean splitting of the *Jok*’s identity has not, to my knowledge, been settled.
 28. Hayley (1947). The *tipo* was believed to be immortal, but traditionally the Langi had no conception of an afterlife comparable to that of the Christian tradition. After the *tipo* left the body, and was propitiated with the appropriate funeral rites, it was believed to vaguely inhabit the world, particularly the air, where its body was buried.
 29. Even in those cases where the informant was uncertain whether or not the cause of their pain was spiritual or psychosomatic, the consequences were the same.
 30. In such cases, Hayley (1947) describes a practice by which a body is exhumed and burned (*golo chogo*, “digging up the bones”) in order to deprive a malignant spirit of its status as ancestor, of which it has proved itself unworthy.
 31. Rev. George Okello Otim, male, age: 50, 6/16/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 32. John Charles Kami Odur, male, age: mid 60s, 7/24/2011, outside Lira, Uganda.
 33. The only informants who did not speak to this were younger informants, typically twenty-five and under, who didn’t have the perspective to comment on cultural trans-formation. Nevertheless, these informants often echoed their elders on the subject, believing that the war had undermined clan leaders.
 34. Absallam Kenneth Oteng, male, age: 82, Lira 7/4/11, Lira, Uganda.
 35. Rev. George Okello Otim, male, age: 50, 6/16/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 36. Oliwit George, male, age: early 60s, 6/30/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 37. Apio Serena, female, age: 45, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 38. Adong Helena, female, age: 71, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 39. Ayo Jimmy, male, age: 24, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 40. Olaga Tom, male, age: 56, 7/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 41. Rev. Jimmy Aagang Okello, male, age: 58, 6/18/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 42. Driberg (1923), 204.
 43. Tosh (1978), 150.
 44. It would be difficult to overstate the long-standing social and political consequences of colonial administration. The ripple effects were profound, transforming relations at all levels of society. For example, Okello-Ogwang (1994) makes the case that British occupation led to a reshuffling of gender roles in Lango that increased the marginalization of women, since most of the colonial institutions were geared towards tapping the resources and labor of the male population in the education, military, clerical, and technical sectors. The literature’s apprehension of the gendered consequences of the occupation in Lango is perhaps still poorly understood, but marked gendered differences persist. For example, in Barlonyo, far more men than women can read, and in general men are prioritized in terms of education. The extent to which the blame for this can be laid at the feet of British colonizers, as Okello-Ogwang asserts, is unclear.
 45. Indeed, it should be noted that the British largely adopted a system of clan-based administration built on Bugandan hierarchy, such that the administrative set-up was called the “Ganda model.” See Tosh (1978).
 46. Gertz (1974), 27.
 47. Tosh (1978), 237-238.
 48. Ibid.
 49. Gertz (1974) provides a detailed account of the negotiations that led to the founding of the office of the Wonnyacci.
 50. There are reasons to be skeptical of such a thing happening. The Wonnyacci is reviled in many quarters as a puppet of the government, a charge given greater credence given that he is, in fact, on the President’s payroll. Furthermore, evidence of the Wonnyacci’s priorities was on display at a cultural leaders meeting held in Lira on 17 June 2011. Cultural leaders – including *owitongi*, government officials, and religious leaders – from across Lango were invited to attend. The meeting was held at the Langi Cultural Center, a large concrete amphitheatre with a tin

roof and a stage backed by a painting of a rhinoceros on the savannah. The rhinoceros is the symbol of the Langi people, and is suggestive of one who is slow to anger, but unstoppable when roused. The amphitheatre was crowded and notables sat on a stage in the front. The building had no walls and thankfully there was a breeze, which carried the smell of a nearby cook fire. Chickens clucked and stalked the floor. There were wasp nests in the rafters.

The Wonnyacci and his wife arrived in a chauffeured car. Everyone stood, a choir started singing. The Wonnyacci sat on a throne on the stage, with his wife by his side, and the meeting began. The goal of the meeting was “Protecting the Cultural Values” of Lango, and for several hours politicians and cultural leaders stood to pay their respects to the Wonnyacci and to assert the importance of the culture and the need to involve the youth. There was general agreement that the culture was being lost, and that action needed to be taken so that it could be revived.

When the Wonnyacci spoke, he thanked everyone for attending, echoed what had been said, and perfunctorily announced several political appointments. There was applause. He became very impassioned on two subjects: denouncing homosexuality and then expressing his need for a palace. Plans were unfurled for a multi-thousand square-foot “State House for Lango” that would house the Wonnyacci and his wife and attract attention to the leader of the Langi culture. Acquiring land for the palace and building it were two of the four action items coming out of the meeting (the other two were establishing student scholarships and requiring every school to sing the Lango anthem).

Given that most Langi dream of someday building a tin-roof house, the meeting seemed rather tone deaf to the needs of the people. In discussing the Wonnyacci with villagers in Barlonyo, many expressed respect for the office, even as they recognized that traditional practices are in retreat. Others were less generous to the office of the Wonnyacci. As a particularly acerbic and well-spoken informant told me, “The Wonnyacci’s only real commitment is to the enrichment of himself and his family.” Another informant whose mother was killed in the attack said that the instability of the war had scattered the people and weakened the clan, and he didn’t think that the Wonnyacci – or the traditional cultural leaders in general – could do anything to address the problem. “I have no idea who they are,” he said, shrugging. “They’re foreigners.”

51. Otoa Tony, male, age: 70, 6/14/11, Lira, Uganda.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Van Gennep (1960) provides an interesting discussion of mourning rituals as rites of transition: “[Mourning] is a transitional period for the survivors, and they enter it through rites of separation and emerge from it through rites of reintegration into society (rights of the lifting of mourning). . . . During mourning, the living mourners and the deceased constitute a special group, situated between the world of the living and the world of the dead. . .” (147).

55. Driberg offers an extensive account of these practices.

56. Male mourners shaved their three days after the death. Female mourners shaved their heads on the fourth day. Informants were not able to provide an explanation for why the head was shaved. Hayley (1947) notes that shaving the head of the dead was linked in part to fertility – if the hair was not shaved from a dead man’s bregma, the meeting place of the coronal and sagittal sutures (*chwiny wich*) – his widow could never again bear children. The connection is somewhat mysterious, but the *chwiny wich* was the spot on a baby that was said to have no bone. Shaving the head also served the purpose of identifying whether or not the dead person was a sorcerer – an authoritative sign being, apparently, a nail driven into the bregma, revealed when the head was shaved. Such a person would be accorded normal burial, but the demonstrations of grief would not be as indulgent.

57. Driberg (1923).

58. The family of the deceased would present the burier of the dead with an animal – variously a ram or a chicken, which was to be killed and eaten on the day after the funeral.

59. Driberg (1923).

60. According to both informants and the literature, the bull was often contributed by the brother of the deceased.

61. Rev. Jimmy Aagang Okello, male, age: 58, 6/13/2011, Lira, Uganda. This was also detailed by Driberg (1923).

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Tony Otoa, male, age: 70, 6/14/2011, Lira, Uganda.

65. Ojok Dennis, male, age: 32, 6/9/2011, Lira, Uganda.

66. Adong Helena, female, age: 71, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.

67. Achan Molly, female, age: 45, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.

68. Rev. George Okello Otim, male, age: 50, 6/16/2011, Lira, Uganda.

69. Rev. Jimmy Aagang Okello, male, age: 58, 6/13/2011, Lira, Uganda.

70. Odong Mario, male, age: 32, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.

71. Okidi Joseph, male, age: 57, 7/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.

72. Ojok Dennis, male, age: 32, 6/9/2011, Lira, Uganda.

73. Ajok Florence, female, age: 35, 7/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.

74. Rev. George Okello Otim, male, age: 50, 6/16/2011, Lira, Uganda.

75. Tony Otoa, male, age: 70, 6/14/2011, Lira, Uganda. Otoa’s remark, echoed by many informants, reminded me of Jack Kugelman’s notion that memory is a process of both remembering and forgetting (quoted in Ross (1992)).

76. Mazurana et al. (forthcoming).

77. Many believe that only the dead appear in dreams. For example, if someone taken by the LRA later appears in a

- family member's dream, the conclusion may be that the person has died, and that funerary rites must be held. However, this view was not universal among informants.
78. Ojok Dennis, male, age: 32, 6/9/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 79. Rev. Jimmy Aagang Okello, male, age: 58, 6/13/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 80. Ayugi Aida, female, age: 68, 6/17/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 81. Interestingly, the notion of breathing "bad air", as she described it, is consonant with the old belief that *Jok* itself inhabited the wind – thus a bad or polluted air could be expected to have negative spiritual implications, in addition to harming one's health.
 82. Ibid.
 83. Ogwari Geoffrey, male, age: 47, 6/17/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 84. Ongom Richard, male, age: 14, 7/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 85. Akonga Esther, female, age: 50 6/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 86. Mazurana et al. (forthcoming).
 87. Oliwit George, male, age: early 60s, 6/30/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 88. Ibid.
 89. Achen Harriet, female, age: 40, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 90. Ayugi Aida, female, age: 68, 6/17/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 91. Odongo Yuventino, male, age: 47 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 92. Apet Rhoda, female, age: 28, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 93. Ochen Martin, male, age: 45, 7/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 94. Achan Molly, female, age: 45, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 95. Auma Elizabeth, female, age: 55, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 96. Opio Patrick, male, age: 35, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 97. Alele Grace, female, age: 71, 7/21/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 98. Olaga Tom, male, age: 56, 7/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 99. John Charles Kami Odur, male, age: mid 60s, 7/24/2011, outside Lira, Uganda.
 100. Rev. George Okello Otim, male, age: 50, 6/16/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 101. Mazurana et al. (forthcoming).
 102. Adongo Janet, female, age: 47, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 103. Alele Stella, female, age: 58, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 104. Olaga Charles, male, age: 25, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 105. Ibid.
 106. Okii Anna, female, age: 54, 6/17/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 107. Odongo Yuventino, male, age: 47, 7/6/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 108. Ogwang Moses, male, age: 42, 6/17/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 109. Quinto Okello, male, age: 33, 6/23/2011, Barlonyo, Uganda.
 110. Ibid., 6/17/2011.
 111. I subsequently spoke with Candia Leone and Abiti Nelson (6/24/2011), representatives of the Ugandan Office of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities. This office is responsible for memorials like the one proposed in Barlonyo. While they emphasized the importance of local control, they denounced the idea of displaying remains or creating a tourist attraction. "It has nothing to do with tourism," Nelson said emphatically. "All remains should be buried." The issue, he said, was preserving memories for the benefit and dignity of the community. "We need our history to be preserved so that children who come in the future will learn from the past and not make the same mistakes," he said. However, he acknowledged that historical preservation was a fraught process. If the community makes the decision that it wants to preserve the past, he wondered aloud, "what kinds of memories do [they] want to preserve?"
 112. Okoch Ferdinand, male, age: early 40s, 7/12/2011, Lira, Uganda.
 113. Ibid.
 114. Mazurana et al. (forthcoming).
 115. While this study included hypothetical interview questions – i.e., "if it were possible to identify the bodies, would you then support exhumation?" – some informants refused to countenance the possibility, believing identification to be impossible.

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