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# BOUNDARIES OF BEAUTY

## *Tattooed Secrets of Women's History in Magude District, Southern Mozambique*

Heidi Gengenbach

The Lenge and the Tsopi women have the story of their lives written on their own flesh. . . .

E. Dora Earchy, *Valenge Women*<sup>1</sup>

*This article explores women's experiences of Portuguese colonialism in southern Mozambique through their changing practices of body-marking since around 1800. Arguing that women have historically used tattoos (tinhlanga) both to reflect on agrarian social change and to assert the importance of female affiliations in a male-dominated world, it charts the increasing incorporation of European ideas and objects into what women continued to call a "traditional" practice, and the heightened significance of tattooing for those women most adversely affected by colonial rule. The persistence of tinhlanga challenged Portuguese colonial and missionary efforts to implant "civilization" through new standards of feminine beauty and bodily adornment. The ensuing struggle pitted colonizers and African "middles" against girls and women who were fully aware of the significance of their bodies in the colonial contest, and whose memories (and tattoo scars) reveal the gendered meanings of racial difference and the limits of European power in colonial Mozambique.*

### Introduction

Some of the most innovative work in African history in recent years scrutinizes the body—the gendered, dark-skinned body—as text, social object, and field for the inscription and operation of colonial power. Focusing on the range of practices through which African bodies were disciplined and commodified by European regimes, this literature has paid particular attention to the role of Christianity, clothing, and biomedicine in the transformation of African lifeways between the late nineteenth century and today.<sup>2</sup> Much of this research has been inspired by philosopher Michel Foucault's arguments about "bio-power": "The body is . . . directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs."<sup>3</sup> Yet discussions of colonized bodies

also spring from, and flow into, wider debates about colonialism itself, prodding us to rethink European conquest of Africa as an intervention of the most intimate kind, an embodied experience where power engages even “private” identities, behaviors, and affections.

Writing the history of colonial bodies has necessarily involved new kinds of evidence as well as novel approaches to conventional sources. Advertisements, letters, gossip, household objects—all have been mined as texts that reveal the corporeal meanings of colonization for the men and women who were its victims, and in some cases its agents. It may seem strange, then, that the body itself has been neglected as a source for African colonial history. Indeed, conspicuously absent in this literature, with its emphasis on the unstable quality of the colonized body politic, is interrogation of the historical meanings etched on African bodies unclothed, above all, the signs of personhood worn in the form of body-markings or “tattoos” on men’s and women’s skin.<sup>4</sup> Studies of body-markings in other contexts have historicized this practice, using metaphors such as “canvas,” “envelope,” or “screen” to conceptualize the relationship between skin-as-medium and skin-as-message as it has changed over time. This textual approach to tattooing highlights its function as a claim about identity or a record of life-defining events, typically embraced by members of marginal or “deviant” social groups.<sup>5</sup> It also, however, naturalizes the body as a surface “onto which patterns of signification can be inscribed,” a view that obscures the cultural meanings of the body itself, and the powers of skin-as-boundary to define individuals and communities—bodies marked and unmarked—dialectically, at the same time.<sup>6</sup>

This paper argues that the body-markings of women in southern Mozambique are indispensable sources for understanding women’s experiences of Portuguese colonialism and a vital form of evidence for African colonial history more broadly. When I began fieldwork in rural Magude district (Maputo province) in 1995, I knew from written sources that women had been tattooing<sup>7</sup> one another in this area for at least two hundred years. Some women rebuffed my early efforts to question them about the decorative marks (in Shangaan, *tinhlanga*) I saw on their skin; however, the power of *tinhlanga* as closely guarded symbols of a gendered past was unmistakable.<sup>8</sup> In my first interview with Valentina Chauke, for instance, I asked if she had done anything to “make herself beautiful” when she was a girl. Valentina shook her head forcefully in reply, but my assistant Aida Dzamba smiled and pointed to the scars on Valentina’s forearms. Valentina retorted, “That wasn’t me! That was Ntete, the daughter of Nyanga. She brought these things back here from that prostitution of hers!”<sup>9</sup> “These things”—“VALENTINA” on her right arm, “CHAUKE” on her left—were all she would admit to that day; however, Valentina’s daugh-

ter, Talita Ubisse, betrayed her when we interviewed Talita that same afternoon. Asked about "making herself beautiful" when she was young, Talita responded, "We were poor, I couldn't buy dresses." But when Aida prodded her with "No, she wants to know, maybe you cut tattoos," Talita shrieked with delight and laughed until tears rolled down her face. "Hee!! Hee!! Truly! I wrote on myself, I cut tattoos!" When we said our good-byes, Talita commented that it was "not good to hide those things that were customs long ago," and encouraged us to pursue the topic of *tinhlanga* with her mother again.<sup>10</sup>

The next day, during interviews with two of Talita's neighbors, the women themselves introduced the subject of *tinhlanga*, and promptly hoisted their skirts to reveal the tattoos on their thighs. My suspicion that someone was spreading the word in the community was confirmed when I and my two assistants began to hear of other women who suddenly wanted us to visit them. One elderly woman stopped me on the footpath one day and yanked up her red turtleneck to display the *tinhlanga* on her stomach and chest. I later learned that she was notorious for such exhibitions, but her behavior was not as unusual as I then believed. Once women learned that I was genuinely interested in their tattoos, they began offering their bodies, and stories about their bodies, as evidence of their pasts, inviting us to scrutinize not only their *tinhlanga* but also the memories the scars contained.

Reading history from women's body-markings is not as strange a proposition as it might appear. There is a thin trail of documentary evidence of tattooing in southern Mozambique, beginning around 1800, when European visitors to the busy port town of Delagoa Bay caught sight of tattooed men and women in and around the Portuguese settlement. European ivory hunters and explorers similarly noted the decorative scars on "native" skin as they roamed the region in the turbulent nineteenth century, especially after the conquest of much of this area by the Gaza Nguni in the 1820s,<sup>11</sup> and as imperial competition for the territory heated up from 1880 on. The spread of Swiss Presbyterian missionaries from the Transvaal into southern Mozambique during the 1880s and Portugal's defeat of the Gaza king Ngungunyana in 1895 ushered in the period of formal colonization and stimulated a flurry of reports detailing "native customs and traditions" among the "Tsonga."<sup>12</sup> In these texts, too, *tinhlanga* attracted European attention, but by this time, the majority of men in southern Mozambique were migrating to work in South Africa and had begun to abandon the habit of body-marking. Tattooing became, in European eyes, a frivolous if intriguing feminine practice, a holdover from the "primitive" past though one that showed a curious persistence throughout the colonial period.

When, after a decade-long liberation struggle in Mozambique, the 1974 military coup in Portugal freed the colony from European rule, the new governing party, Frelimo (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) included *tinhlanga* among the “obscurantist” customs its socialist revolution sought to eradicate. Yet survey teams sent out by the Ministry of Culture in the 1980s to document extant “traditions” found women throughout southern Mozambique with vibrant memories of tattooing; and wherever I went in Magude in the mid-1990s, I met women whose knowledge of “old ways” of body-marking had survived even the horrific sixteen-year war against Renamo.<sup>13</sup> In that moment of profound uncertainty, when displaced families were filtering back into the district and facing hardship on every front, tattoos, of all things, were what women wanted to talk about, and the force of their recollections alone compels us to listen to what they have to say.

If two hundred years’ worth of written evidence is available, why focus on body-marking as a source for colonial history? Interviewees’ stories about *tinhlanga* expose some of the most intimate—and ambitious—reaches of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique; while other invaders and immigrants reacted to local habits of body-marking, only the European colonizers (and, revealingly, their African “middles”<sup>14</sup>) turned the elimination of women’s tattoos into a near-religious crusade. Yet the intensity of this struggle was due less to a priori colonial determination than to women’s awareness that their efforts to “make themselves beautiful” were as threatening to European power as they were precious to the women themselves. Memories of *tinhlanga* center the colonial moment, in other words, because colonialism simultaneously undermined and encouraged women’s tattooing. *Tinhlanga* may have predated and outlived European rule, but it was the European presence that cast their gendered value in sharp relief.

Tattooing was valuable to women for two reasons. First, *tinhlanga* provided an idiom both for mediating androcentric social structures and for asserting female-centered networks of affiliation, whether in the private spaces of friendship, the uneven playing field of patrilineal kinship, or the high-stakes realm of colonial race relations. In the waves of crisis and conflict that swept the region after 1800, women used their skin to map a social world in which boundaries of belonging were rooted less in ascribed familial or ethnic identity than in shared feminine culture, bodily experience, and geographic place. Under the mounting pressures of the twentieth century, “blood ties” forged through tattooing—more flexible and inclusive than those dictated by birth or marriage—became an important resource for women in need.

Second, *tinhlanga* offered women a bold yet “secret” (*xihundla*) voice

for telling history, a silent yet visible language for commenting on social change—for a strictly female audience—in a context where oral traditions did not take women's perspectives into account, and where women were often not supposed to put their feelings into words.<sup>15</sup> The secrecy of tattooing took on dangerously subversive implications during the colonial period, as colonizers strove to implant "civilization" and commodity capitalism in part by forcing women to adorn their bodies in "white" (*xilungu*) ways. But if colonizers insisted that what women did to their skin was a mark of "civilization's" progress, women insisted in turn that they could use their bodies to define identity themselves, not by shrugging off "white" standards of beauty but by renegotiating—through *tinhlanga*—the frontier between "white" and "black" (*xilandin*) ways, incorporating colonial things into what they continued to call a "traditional" practice.

The remainder of this paper is organized into three sections. In the first, I discuss European writings on *tinhlanga*. In the second, I turn to women's reminiscences about tattooing—why they did it, how it was done, why they chose particular designs. I interviewed over forty women on this subject, born between 1905 and the mid-1930s; when the eldest women in this group recalled the tattoos of older female relatives, they could provide a glimpse of body-marking practices back to the late 1800s. In the third section, I explore changing patterns of *tinhlanga* themselves. My methodology here combines oral history with the insights of feminist archaeologists who have teased out women's pasts from the tracks of social and spatial relationships embedded in feminine material culture.<sup>16</sup> Grounding my arguments in the interface of memory and cultural production, I interpret transformations in women's body-marking in the context of mission Christianity, schooling, migrant labor, Portuguese racial ideologies, and increasing marriage and family pressures during and after the colonial period. Significantly, women said very little about reasons for changes in tattooing—in fact, it is difficult to periodize this history from women's memories alone, which speak in a uniformly ahistorical voice. Yet women's insistence on the atemporality of their tattoos in fact exposes one of *tinhlanga's* boldest claims: that Portuguese colonialism had little if any impact on rural women; that despite the aggressive presence of *xilungu* attitudes and ways, daily life in the countryside—at least for women—remained essentially the same.

### **"Ornamental Mutilations": European Views of *Tinhlanga***

William White, a British merchant who visited southern Mozambique in 1798, published one of the first comments on body-marking among local men and women:

They are all tattooed, some down the middle of the forehead, and point of the chin . . . ; and of their temples, of this shape X : their bodies are so likewise, particularly on the chest, but none of them are exactly alike; those, however, of the same family, are tattooed very nearly in the same manner [Figure 1].<sup>17</sup>

The tension here between White's recognition of the uniqueness of an individual's tattoos and his belief that tattoos showed "family" resemblances prefigures the central problem with European writings about *tinhlanga* from 1800 on. Europeans presumed that Africans were divided along "tribal" lines, with ethnicity and its subcategories (for example, clan or lineage) determining how people decorated their bodies—even when decorative marks did not follow such divisions perfectly. Thus, in the early nineteenth century, when European traders met travelers with tattooed faces and chests hailing from anywhere between the Limpopo River and Delagoa Bay, they took it for granted that these men belonged to a single ethnic group—labeled by historians later as "proto-Tsonga."<sup>18</sup> This correlation of particular decorative markings with people known as Tsonga-Shangaan hardened from the 1840s on, when Portuguese hunter and slave-trader João Albasini was joined at his military stronghold in the northern Transvaal by refugees from southern Mozambique who bore large keloid scars on their noses and cheeks—described as "knobs," "lumps," "warts," and "buttons"—which earned them the epithet "Knobnose" from residents of the Zoutpansberg.<sup>19</sup>

After mid-century, European writings began to include more elaborate descriptions of "native" practices of bodily adornment, from tattooing to teeth-filing, lip-piercing, jewelry, and dress. These commentaries also became more openly concerned with distinguishing dark-skinned "savages" from light-skinned bearers of "civilization." Reading tattoos as a "marker of the primitive,"<sup>20</sup> imperial observers believed that differences in personal ornamentation reflected Africans' position on the evolutionary hierarchy, and ranked "tribal" groups according to their cultural resilience in the face of pressures for change. In these discussions, the Tsonga appear to have an unusually plastic ethnic identity. According to Henri Alexandre Junod, a Swiss missionary and prolific writer on the Tsonga, keloid facial tattooing had "ancient" roots in the coastal lowlands around the Save River. When "proto-Tsonga" groups invaded this area in the fifteenth century, their subjects ridiculed the "flat noses" of their conquerors so relentlessly that the latter adopted facial tattooing themselves. With the Nguni invasions of the early nineteenth century, these markings assumed heightened political significance when Zulu armies sent in pursuit of the rebel Nguni leader Soshangane targeted men with no "buttons on their face," and many Nguni soldiers decided to "submit to the opera-



Figure 1. William M. White, *Journal of a Voyage Performed in the Lion extra Indiaman, from Madras to Colombo and Da Lagoa Bay . . . in the Year 1798* (London, 1800), p. 27.

tion."<sup>21</sup> By the 1860s and 1870s, however, when British explorers were criss-crossing southern Mozambique, "knobnose" tattooing had become a scorned sign of inferiority among subject peoples, and was being supplanted by the style of ear-piercing popular among the Nguni elite.<sup>22</sup> As Europeans saw it, this transformation in body-marking signaled a wholesale acceptance of assimilation into a conquering "tribe." St. Vincent Erskine summed up the prevailing view when he wrote in 1868 that "Knob-nosed Caffres" had "amalgamated with the tribes of Manjaje and Umzeila. . . . In a few years knob-noses will be as extinct as pig-tails."<sup>23</sup>

Yet amalgamation with respect to tattooing was a distinctly gendered process: not only were women decorating their skin more extensively than men at this time, but they also continued doing so even after men adopted plain-skinned Nguni—then European—fashions of bodily adornment. In 1870, as Frederick Elton noted, "Tsonga" women were still "tattooing a double line of warts across the forehead, joined by a curve on either cheek, and occasionally a double or even triple row of lumps and stars across the upper part of the bosom, or an elaborate pattern on the abdomen."<sup>24</sup> By the early twentieth century, ear-piercing was the only form of body-mark-





Figure 2. Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchatel, 1913), Vol. I, p. 181.

ing extant among men, yet women's bodies displayed a "bewildering" variety of scars.<sup>25</sup> Surprised that this practice was not disappearing with the "evolution of costume," colonial commentators were nonetheless certain that the once "deep" ritual meanings of *tinhlanga* had "disappeared;" women's tattoos were now merely "ornamental mutilations" connected with "nubility" or marriage—a way, Junod scoffed, "to make themselves prettier . . . as they think!"<sup>26</sup> As late as 1957, a Portuguese report from Magude noted that although "tribal marks" had been "abolished," women "still maintain[ed] the custom of tattooing their inner thighs, groin, and abdomen"—no longer as a "tribal sign," but to "excite the sensuality" of their menfolk.<sup>27</sup>

Not even missionary-ethnographers such as Junod or Emily Dora Earthy, who worked in coastal southern Mozambique from 1917 to 1930,<sup>28</sup> deemed it necessary to look more closely into the stubborn persistence of

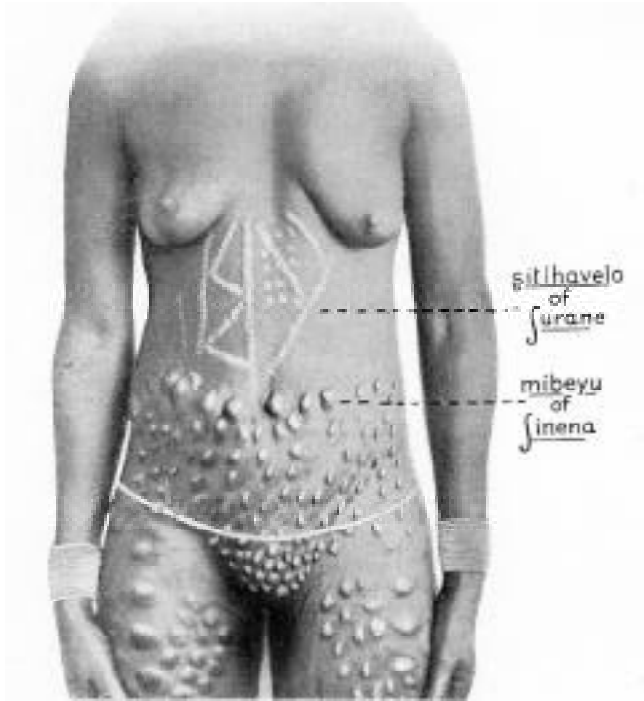


Figure 3. E. Dora Earthly, "On the Significance of the Body Markings of Some Natives of Portuguese East Africa," *South African Journal of Science* 21 (1924): 587.

tattooing among women, or at the meanings of the tattoos themselves. Women, they assumed, were marginal members of patrilineal kinship groups, their body-markings passively derived from the clan or "tribe" into which they were born.<sup>29</sup> (Figure 2) Yet Earthly acknowledged that women's tattoos also followed "particular fashions of certain districts," and that by the 1920s, *tinhlanga* depicted an increasingly diverse range of objects: plants, birds, insects, reptiles, seashells, astral bodies, arrowheads, musical instruments—but also scissors, keys, watches, and waistcoats (Figure 3).<sup>30</sup> Although Earthly's informants told her that they obtained these markings to "do honour to their bodies, to make them beautiful,"<sup>31</sup> the inclusion of elements of a masculine foreign world in their *tinhlanga* repertoire, alongside images from the landscape of women's everyday life, suggests that rather more was going on. Scissors, keys, watches, waist-

coats—for rural women, these items may have represented the gendered materialities of colonialism as it infiltrated the countryside through Portuguese administration, commerce, and South African mining capital. Scissors are a labor-transforming household technology; keys stand for new concepts of privacy, property, and residential space; watches serve as status symbol and keeper of industrial time (the clocks that keep husbands from home); and waistcoats are the archetypically ornamental component of a “civilized gentleman’s” wardrobe, a metonymy for the prodigal—yet necessary—expense of a European-style three-piece suit.

Women’s desire to appropriate the symbolic power of these goods is evident from the following testimony, quoted by Earthy: “If we see any object which particularly pleases us, we go home and have it tatu-ed on our bodies—but if other people envy us, and want to make incisions like ours, we do not reveal where we have seen the object—for the spirit . . . of the thing remains with her who has made a representation of it on her body.”<sup>32</sup> It is this expressive comment that leads Earthy to characterize women’s tattoos as “the story of their lives written on their own flesh”—yet her analysis of *tinhlanga* stops abruptly here. For Earthy, as for earlier European commentators, tattooing may have been “ancient” but it was certainly not historical. Its value lay in its status as a vanishing “custom,” not in its social dimensions as a living practice among women who were determined to continue “making themselves beautiful” in this particular way.

### **Fish, Fashion, and “Fellow Girls”: Women’s Memories of *Tinhlanga***

Women in Magude tell the history of *tinhlanga* very differently from European accounts, and their recollections challenge ethnographic stereotypes on every front. No interviewee gave ethnic or clan identity as the reason for her tattoos, and no two women from the same ethnic group or clan had identical sets of scars. Nor did they portray *tinhlanga* as aimed primarily at transforming girls into sexually desirable wives. While many women laughingly confided that tattoos “make your husband happy” because when a man strokes a woman’s scarred body he instantly “wakes up” (that is, achieves erection), interviewees clearly linked heightened male excitement with their own sexual satisfaction: *tinhlanga* not only induced a man to spend more time caressing his wife during foreplay, but they also helped to ensure that he “woke up” (when his penis “rested” against her abdomen or thighs) for a second round of intercourse. Perhaps more telling, many women had their first tattoos cut long before puberty, and some went on accumulating them through adulthood even after a failed

marriage had convinced them to live without men. While the desire to be attractive to men certainly mattered, and other divorced or widowed women who added to their *tinhlanga* did so in part for this reason, women's raucous stories about husbands' comically slavish attention to tattooed wives (or mistresses) represent male pleasure as an ancillary effect of *tinhlanga*; and one woman who was not tattooed at all challenged me to deny that a man "needs more than that little hole" to enjoy intercourse.<sup>33</sup>

The emphasis in oral narratives on the "secrecy" surrounding the act of "cutting" tattoos also troubles the assumption that body-marking was a rite of initiation girls endured under the supervision of female elders. *Tinhlanga*, according to interviewees, were always done "in the bush" (*nhoveni, khwatini*), so that no one would "see all that blood."<sup>34</sup> Small groups of girls would "invite one another" and make clandestine arrangements to meet at dawn the following day, having prepared what they needed for the operation (cloth to staunch the bleeding, for example) the night before. They would sneak off in the morning without telling anyone where they were going; as Valentina Chauke retorted, scolding me for asking whether she told her grandmother when she had her tattoos done, "Hoh! Do you show those elders? You didn't talk about these things, even with your grandmothers. Back then, we had respect! They know we're doing these things, but they don't say anything, and we don't say anything. It's our secret, of the girls."<sup>35</sup> Senior women may have advised girls to get themselves tattooed, but as Teasse Xivuri explained, no one "forced" them to do it: "Our mothers said, 'You, if you don't want *tinhlanga*, you don't do it. If you want them, you'll do it too.'"<sup>36</sup>

The discretionary nature of tattooing was also reflected in memories of how the *tinhlanga* economy functioned. If a girl wanted to be "cut," she went to the tattoo artist (*mutlhaveli*) of her choice, whether a relative, a neighbor, or a stranger with a reputation for not "hurting" too much or causing infection. The *mutlhaveli* could be of any age, from an "old woman" (*xikoxana*) to a slightly older girl; and the most skillful among them had "lines of girls" requesting their services.<sup>37</sup> Unless the *mutlhaveli* was a relative, girls were expected to compensate her with a gift such as a few hours of work in her fields, a load of water or firewood, a tin of corn, a bead bracelet, or a safety pin to "wash her eyes" because she had seen so much blood. In rare instances, they might give her a small amount of money, but interviewees declared unanimously that cash presents were never a payment (*hakelo*)—tattooing, they insisted, was not a commercial transaction.

When asked to explain why they cut tattoos, interviewees' most common first response—as among Earthy's informants—was "to make myself beautiful," "to beautify [*kuxongisa*] my body." Beauty is, of course, historically specific, constituted by ideals shared among people with a

sense of common social location and cultural identity.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the relational content of tattooed beauty in Magude was clear in the comment that usually followed women's first response: "Well, I saw what my fellow girls had, and me, I longed for it too." By "fellow" (*kulorhi*), women meant other females in their age-group (*ntangha*), with divisions based on puberty, marriage, and motherhood. However, the fellowship of tattooing was also contingent on shared geographic place. The over-emphasis in southern Mozambique's historiography on male mobility through migrant labor has created the impression that rural women have been pinned to the farms of their fathers and husbands, excluded from regional circuits of migrancy and travel unless forced to uproot themselves by poverty, domestic violence, famine, or war.<sup>39</sup> Yet interviewees recalled women of all ages wandering quite freely across the agrarian landscape, their horizons of mobility defined formally by the *tiko* (chieftaincy) where they resided but shaped informally by paths traversed with female peers or relatives for long-distance visiting and trade. Memories of mothers and grandmothers from the late 1800s indicate that women's travels could take them fifty miles or more on foot in any direction, including east to the coast, north beyond the Limpopo, and west into the South African lowveld and the Zoutpansberg.<sup>40</sup> During the colonial period, as the Portuguese administration tightened its grip and male migrancy took its toll on the countryside, girls and women may have begun traveling more out of need than recreation; but whether motivated by sociability or survival, their overlapping movements enabled them to create new networks of female "fellowship" through the crossing of physical and visual paths beyond the confines of home. Interviewees described these journeys as opportunities to enrich themselves by absorbing all they saw along the way. As Aldina Masangu recalled, "It's because, there's traveling. Well, when you travel, you go and you arrive at a place, or maybe another person arrives there. And you see those people of that land, you'll know that, there they do such-and-such. We say, 'Heh! And me, I want these things! And me, I want them too!'"<sup>41</sup>

Whether at home or on the road, the key site of female connection was at the river's edge, where girls and women went to draw water, wash clothing, and bathe every day. Like the "bush," "at the river" (*combeni*) was a pivotal location in tattooing stories, the place where fellow girls and women compared the "beauty" of one another's *tinhlanga*, and where tattoo-based friendships were negotiated and sealed. Indeed, as Albertina Tiwana explained, the imperatives of friendship left many girls feeling they had little choice where *tinhlanga* were concerned: "Don't I long for what my friends have? When we're swimming around in the water, they show each other, 'Eh, look at my tattoos!' 'Eh, look at mine!' Well . . . when

I see that woman is cutting tattoos again, shoo! I go."<sup>42</sup> The desire to belong to communities of female friendship (*xinghanu*), whose boundaries were marked by shared standards of tattooed beauty, was just as compelling when young women moved to their marital home (*vukatini*), typically some distance away from where they had grown up. Anxious to shed newcomer status and forge affective bonds beyond the precarious circle of her in-laws, a bride often found that *tinhlanga* were an effective means of laying the groundwork of friendship among women with whom she might have nothing in common besides the geography of virilocal marriage. Here too, as Melina Xivuri indicated, the river was a crucial site for fostering such connections:

Those fellow women, they'll see me, because long ago, truly, we didn't use clothes! . . . They see me, ah! These things made us happy. When you're at home, or maybe you're at the river, you look each other over. Maybe you're washing each other's backs, your fellow women. Eh-heh. "Heh! You, those tattoos are really beautiful!" "Eh, friend [*chomi*]! Indeed, where did you cut those tattoos? Me, I want them too!"<sup>43</sup>

As this quotation suggests, "looking each other over" could also be an envious act; the flip-side of longing to be as "beautiful" as one's fellows was that peer pressure and a competitive female gaze—often vocalized in name-calling—could make the decision to be cut unavoidable for even the most fearful girls. Just as Earthy found in the 1920s, interviewees in Magude described peer mockery that compared unscarred female bodies to fish (*nhlampfi*), a taunt they explained in terms of either the "white" color of a fish's belly or the smoothness of unmarked skin, which made a woman's body "slippery" and hard for a man to "grasp." That tattooing was perceived as one constituent of gender identity is implied more directly in some women's recollection that they were called "men" until they were tattooed. Yet here again, oral accounts make clear that painfully inscribed standards of feminine beauty were targeted more at a female than male audience.

The central feature of every *tinhlanga* story was a graphic description of the "suffering" the operation entailed. In voices that ranged from melodramatic whisper to comic shriek, women narrated how their skin was "stabbed" and "chopped," how their "blood ran everywhere," how they thought their "bowels were coming out," how some girls had to be held down by their friends so that their squirming would not "spoil" the scars. Girls who sat through the process stoically were considered "strong" or "steady" (*kutiya*) and "courageous" (*kutimisa*); women who were cut repeatedly wore on their skin permanent proof that they had no "fear"

(*kuchava*). Essential to these stories is a curious inversion of what we commonly read about the dangerous power of spilled female blood in the societies of southeastern Africa. In a context where menstrual blood is believed to endanger the health of men and cattle, where menstruating women are considered so “taboo” (*kuyila*) that they are denied not only sexual access to men but also physical contact with anything that might touch and so “pollute” them,<sup>44</sup> interviewees took almost defiant pride in their willingness to shed non-menstrual blood in copious quantities. The prominence of this image in oral narratives suggests its centrality to the meaning of *tinhlanga* for women, and invites a closer look at the gendered symbolism of blood (*ngati*) in these circumstances.<sup>45</sup> Although I would argue that interviewees evoked blood in a literal sense—they did “bleed everywhere,” and blood loss is what they wanted to talk about—Shangaan proverbs and stories, and Junod’s writings, hint at additional possible interpretations of women’s dwelling on blood in this rather gruesome way.

According to these sources, non-menstrual blood possesses a number of contradictory powers. A metaphor for both the deepest obligations of kinship and the effort required to fulfill one’s goals in life (“There is no tattoo without blood,” that is, no achievement without struggle), blood is a positive force, a substance that guarantees personal well-being just as it heals illness, misfortune, or spirit possession when spilled through animal sacrifice or consumed as part of a ritual cure. Yet blood is also the most treacherous of the body’s fluids: the loss of blood saps one’s physical and moral strength (someone who is corrupt or cowardly is said to have “weak blood”); blood that has fallen on the ground must immediately be covered with sand because “wizards” might use it to make deadly “charms” (called “*tingati*,” the plural for “blood”); and life-sustaining liquids such as milk or beer can be made life-threatening by being magically transformed into blood.<sup>46</sup> With these apparently contrary meanings in mind, women’s panegyrics about voluntary blood loss take on complex importance. Being tattooed means giving up one’s blood and allowing it to fall freely on the ground, which makes one vulnerable to supernatural, physical, and social threats of all kinds. However, blood shed to obtain *tinhlanga* brings valuable rewards: new bonds of kinship (a kind of “blood sisterhood”); proof of nerve and bravery; and, ironically, a kind of dually re-gendered prestige, for if tattooing contributes to the making of girls into women, it does so in part by mimicking the battlefield heroics of men.

In other words, the experience of being tattooed was just as crucial to its social and historical meaning for women as the *tinhlanga* themselves. The essence of this experience was a test—a trial by ordeal—undertaken and judged within a circle of female peers.<sup>47</sup> Aimed both at marking girls’ bodies as feminine and at demonstrating that femininity was a quality

girls had to achieve through their own strength and suffering, the operation generated shared memories that—like shared *tinhlanga* designs—transformed peer pressure and competition into bonds of intragenerational female community.

Being tattooed in turn produced webs of affective ties through which women could assert commonalities of gender over differences of ethnicity, age, class, religion, or education. Rosalina Malungana, for instance, was born in 1914 in rural Guijá (Gaza province) and educated through high school by the Swiss Mission in Lourenço Marques. In 1932, she entered a common-law marriage with a Portuguese truck driver named Agosto Capela, who lived in Chibuto town. Despite his opposition to tattooing, Rosalina succumbed to the riverside teasing of her new female neighbors in Chibuto and had herself tattooed in Agosto's absence, choosing the same *tinhlanga* as two non-Christian, non-literate women she hoped to befriend.<sup>48</sup> Rosalina praised her husband for not beating her when he discovered what she had done, suggesting what she had risked in her quest for feminine fellowship. Yet what emerges more forcefully from her account is the power of *tinhlanga* to ease the tensions she encountered as a woman straddling the racial divide of colonial society. As Rosalina remembers it, her neighbors mocked her for having "the belly of a white person" because, at the age of eighteen, she still had no tattoos. Arriving as an educated outsider and the wife of a white man, Rosalina's racial loyalty was in doubt, and acquiring tattoos both proved her "blackness" and won her acceptance in her new home.

Even for women who did not face this dilemma, *tinhlanga* were a medium of feminine connection that refused to obey or perpetuate other kinds of social boundaries. Shared notions of tattooed beauty often crossed generational lines, because older *vathaveli* influenced girls' choice of designs, and because girls "looked over" the bodies of senior women for inspiration as well. One of the *tinhlanga* Rosalina received in Chibuto, for example, was identical to a tattoo worn by her mother and a paternal aunt, which they had obtained some thirty years earlier.<sup>49</sup> More surprising is the eliding of ethnic differences in women's selection of *tinhlanga*. Lucia Ntumbo, who identifies herself as Nguni, had her tattoos done by her maternal grandmother's sister, Qimidzi Mandlaze, an Ndau woman from north of the Save River and a popular *mutlhaveli*, in whose household in Chaimite (Gaza province) Lucia spent her adolescence. Qimidzi, Lucia remembers, learned her repertoire of tattoo designs from other *vathaveli* in the predominantly Shangaan communities of Chaimite. Lucia's daughter, in turn, has different tattoos than her mother "because she was born in Kitezeni [in northwest Magude], and cut *tinhlanga* there."<sup>50</sup>

Further evidence that the dynamics of women's tattooing reflected



bonds of female affiliation based on linkages through place rather than ethnicity is suggested by the geographic distribution of particular designs, such as the triangular *makandu* pattern (Figure 4). Four interviewees with this design had all received it while residing in or visiting northwestern Magude, and I did not find any women with *makandu* elsewhere in the district. Rosalina Malungana portrayed patterns in *tinhlanga* fashion in explicitly geographical terms when we began discussing keloid scarring of women's lower abdomen and thighs: "That one, the ones who really have those, it's in Zavala, mmm. From Chibuto to here, it's only this one [epigastric scars]. Now, passing Chibuto, going to Zavala, Inharrime, Xitengele, these things go way over there. Mmm. They do that thing. But really, really big, truly!"<sup>51</sup>

### Of God, Race, and Flowerpots: *Tinhlanga* and Colonial History

While interviewees' recollections of tattooing were vividly detailed, women had little to say about how or why *tinhlanga* changed over time. Yet a history of change was visible in their body-markings, which were patterned in conspicuous if not immediately comprehensible ways. *Tinhlanga*, in fact, speak with a "voice" all their own, and the story they tell casts startling new light on rural women's engagement with—and understanding of—Portuguese colonialism. As women struggled to hold their own against colonial power, tattooing remained an activity defined

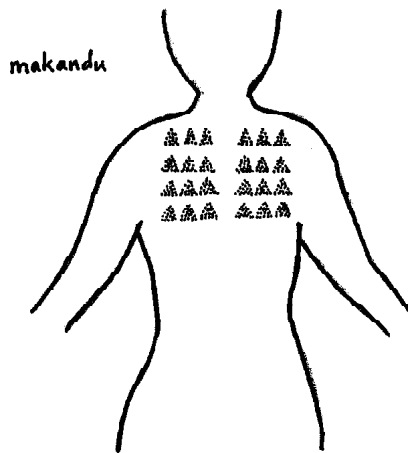


Figure 4

through and for intragenerational female relationships. However, it also underwent a multi-layered shift, from a painful and bloody process that utilized mainly indigenous materials and that was oriented in part to enhancing relations between the sexes, to one that involved less physical discomfort, the use of mainly *xilungu* materials and designs, and a concern with interracial rather than intergender contests.

Certain kinds of *tinhlanga* followed a straight trajectory of decline during and after the late nineteenth century. As European commentators noted, keloid facial scars had largely disappeared from the region by the 1920s. Keloid tattoos on women's shoulders and backs were widespread until the 1920s, but became less common after the 1930s, as did the most extreme form of cicatrization on the lower abdomen, pubic area, and thighs, which sometimes produced scars over half an inch in diameter. Not one of the interviewees, nor any of their daughters, had acquired a pubic tattoo (*vusankusi*) after around 1950. This dorsal and hypogastric tattooing, which women described in especially gory detail, was done by lifting the skin with a fishhook, thorn, or the fingers, and then slicing across it with a razor blade or broken glass. A mixture of ground charcoal or ash and castor oil or red ochre was then rubbed into the wounds to darken the scars. Normally these marks would be re-cut and -colored at least once to heighten the tattoo's visibility and ensure it would last. More painful, more bloody, and more susceptible to infection than other types of tattoos, these *tinhlanga* were also preeminently tactile in nature, and most closely associated with male sexual interest. Another name for the dorsal tattoo, "*xikhoma nkata*"—to "clutch your darling"—makes this meaning explicit.

Incised scarification of women's epigastric area, though, remained more or less constant during this period (late 1910s–1950). All interviewees bore some version of an incised design referred to as *nxurhana* (a geometric pattern consisting of triangles and parallelograms) and / or the *xilova* (sets of parallel and oblique lines) (Figure 5). These *tinhlanga* were made by "drawing" the desired pattern on the skin with charcoal or a stick and then making small cuts along the lines, coloring the scars in the manner described above. *Nxurhana* tattoos range from simple designs based on four or five lines to expansive networks of geometric shapes that wrap around the woman's torso on both sides.<sup>52</sup> In addition, many interviewees also had one or more smaller tattoos incised on their stomach or sides, and these *tinhlanga* were much more diverse (Figure 6). About one-quarter of the group had a tattoo they called *xinkwahlana*, a type of lizard. Katarina Matuka, who was born around 1910 and spent her youth near the heartland of the former Gaza state, had a *tinhlanga* representing the Nguni warriors' oval shield (*xitlhangu*) on her side. Women in their eighties from the western border region of Magude recalled girls there tattoo-

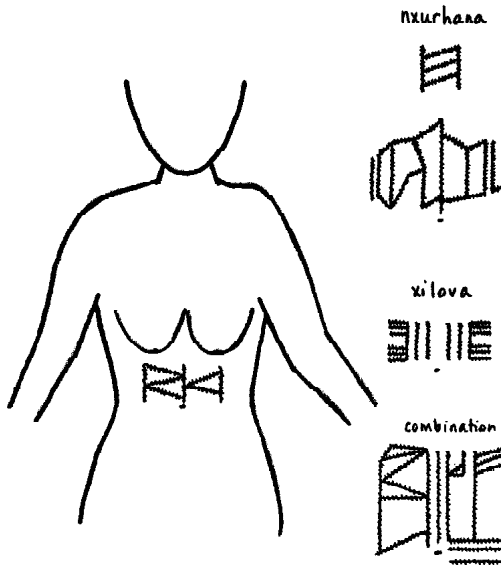


Figure 5

ing their “bellies” with images of flowers and shrubs;<sup>53</sup> two slightly younger women from Facazisse, the community near Magude town where I resided during fieldwork, had a chevron pattern that, according to Earthy, represented an arrowhead or snake, and one of these two women also had a tattoo she called a *ximusana* (small wood pestle). In another trend reminiscent of Earthy’s findings, several women who had grown up near Magude town had a symbol they called *xikero*, or scissors, on one or both sides.

Between the 1920s and the 1940s, depending on the area, a dramatic shift occurred in female tattooing: the introduction of a new method of producing scars using bunches of needles instead of sharp-edged cutting tools. Less painful, messy, and dangerous, needle-tattooing also produced much less tactile—and more narrowly visual—transformations of the skin, and seems to have had no overtly sexual implications; at least, no interviewee mentioned male sexual interest when talking about these *tinhlanga*. This revolution in tattoo technology led to critical changes not only in tattoo aesthetics but also in the social relations of body-marking. By the mid-1920s near Magude town, and the mid-1930s further out in the coun-

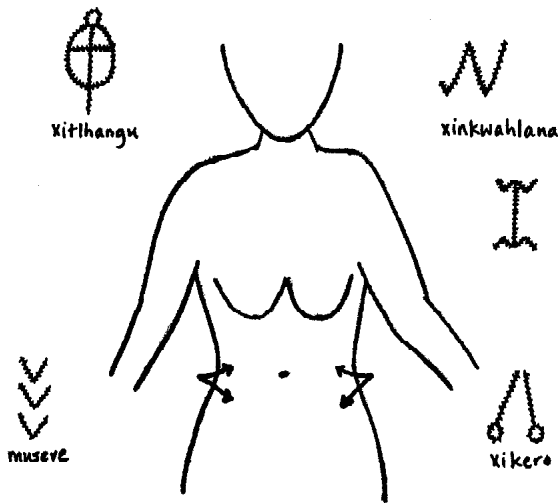


Figure 6

tryside, women remember younger and younger girls—"even children"—using needles and ash to give one another a new style of facial tattoo known as *swibayana*, which consisted of clusters of three or four small round scars on the cheeks, forehead, and chin. More revealing still, women who grew up near the Swiss Mission station at Antioka (Facazisse), where the Swiss and their African evangelists had been proselytizing since the 1880s, recall a popular fad among young girls in the 1920s: having one's European first name "written" on the right forearm, and one's clan name (or the name of "the boy you loved") on the left. In the hands of older girls and women, needles were used to create more complex patterns representing objects from the agrarian landscape, such as women's trusty iron hoe (*xikomvu*) (Figure 7).

By the 1940s, needle-tattooing had encouraged an even more radical departure in women's body-marking, especially in the villages ringing Magude town. Older girls and women began to acquire needle-cut *tinhlanga* on their chest, arms, and thighs; and these designs represented objects of European origin, incorporated new *xilungu* materials such as ink and shoe polish, and in nearly every case were tattooed onto women by men. Migrant workers who returned home from South Africa or Swaziland with "notebooks" of *tinhlanga* styles popular among women in

their place of employment, these men offered their services to female kin and neighbors whose memories of this event stress the excitement of “choosing” among a wealth of new tattoo possibilities on the basis of what “the girls had over there.”<sup>54</sup> The most common male-cut tattoos among interviewees were images of factory-made flowerpots, bevelled diamonds and stars, and a cross-like design representing the trademark of “Blue Cross” condensed milk (Figure 7). Occasionally, the *mutlhaveli* would also include signs of the *xilungu* identity he had acquired while working away from home: his European name, and sometimes the year the tattoo was done (Figure 8).

In a society with stringent controls on male access to women’s bodies, where it is still taboo for a woman to bare her thighs in public, the fact that some women permitted men who were not their husband to have intimate contact with their bodies demands explanation in itself. But when I asked Albertina Tiwana whether she had any problems when her mother’s brother did the *tinhlanga* on her chest and thighs, she responded with a phlegmatic “Mm-mm. We hear that those girls in Swaziland, they weren’t afraid to bathe [in the river] with boys, so we weren’t afraid [to do

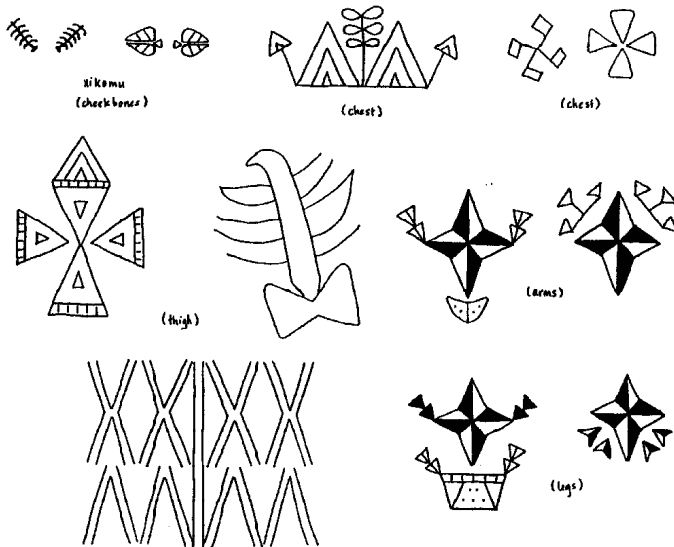


Figure 7

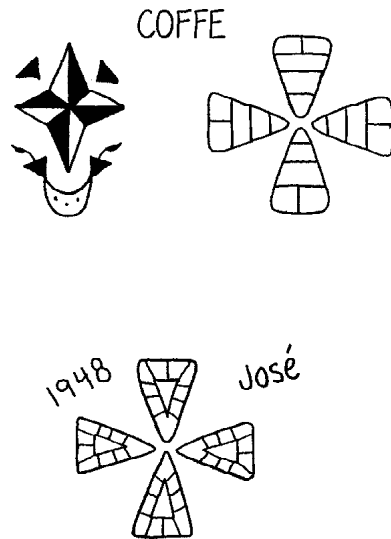


Figure 8

these things] either.”<sup>55</sup> Changes in tattoo technology, then, were interwoven with both changing gender relations and an expanding notion, at least for some women, of the social and cultural world to which they belonged. As conventional boundaries between the sexes were being crossed for the purpose of making women beautiful, so were boundaries among women—in this case, political, ethnic, and geographic boundaries—breaking down as they looked farther afield for models of beauty to make their own. Riverside appraisals, motivated by conflicting desires to imitate, outdo, and claim affinity with prospective “fellows,” had moved from a local to an international stage, with tattoos still as powerful a medium as ever for building and broadening feminine communities through the changes of the mid-twentieth century.

To understand these transformations in *tinhlanga* practice, we need to look at the context in which tattoo styles waxed and waned, and at the changing social complexion of the tattooed population. At the same time as girls and women were adopting new methods of body-marking, they were also confronting new, sometimes violent pressures to cease decorating their bodies altogether. Lise Nsumbane was born c.1910 near the

Antioka mission station, and remembered that at the mission school, "Oh, we hid these things, you know! From the teacher. We hid them, or he beat us, there at school. . . . When . . . your friends, they cut *tinhlanga*, he beat them. He says, 'What's that? Say, are you cutting one another?' . . . Those things, they forbade them! You were beaten for them, truly. [When I asked why, she replied] Ah, they say they're for heathens."<sup>56</sup>

Women who attended the Portuguese Catholic mission school in Magude town in the 1920s told similar stories of freshly cut girls being beaten by priests and African teachers;<sup>57</sup> and Valentina Chauke recalled her Swiss Mission-educated uncle scolding her that *tinhlanga* were a "sin" because they would "finish your blood."<sup>58</sup> As Christianity presented a new physiology of the human body as God's creation, as the "temple of the Holy Ghost"—a vessel not one's own, and not to be "disfigured" in any way—church girls ironically risked corporal punishment by European mission personnel or their African evangelists, lay leaders, and teachers if they were caught with *tinhlanga*. Women's stories often allude to this theological conflict, which swirled as much around meanings of blood and bleeding as around contending ideas about the body itself. For the missionaries and their converts, "finishing" one's blood for the vain purpose of physical beauty not only defied the will of God (who "doesn't want you to change the body He gave you") but also mocked Christianity's symbolic equation of blood loss with sacrifice, redemption, and the gift of everlasting life.<sup>59</sup> Faced with the threat of harsh punishment, some church girls decided not to be tattooed, especially when they hoped to marry a boy from a prominent Christian family. Yet evidence from Magude suggests that these girls formed a very small minority; adolescence in the countryside rarely entailed the luxury of bodily privacy, and peer ridicule was less easily avoided—and sometimes more cruel—than disciplinary sanctions girls encountered in the public domain.

Other girls, however, rejected *tinhlanga* not because of religion but for reasons they presented in terms of ethnicity or "race" (*muxaka*). Sara Juma, born in 1942 to a Shangaan woman and her *mestiço* husband, refused to be tattooed because "I wasn't . . . of that race, those Shangaan people":

I was different, I was—those Shangaan things, I didn't follow them well, because I didn't know anything Shangaan. . . . Because I didn't want that . . . , well, there were these things, eh, cutting *tinhlanga*, I don't know what else. Now I, no. [laughs] Even my mother didn't want that. I wasn't one of these people to go around doing *tinhlanga*. Mmm. My mother didn't want me to follow those *xilandin* [black] ways. [H: Why not?] Ah, it's my mother who didn't want it, because I wasn't . . . of that race, for

me to run around, to know things that those people were doing. My sisters, those daughters of my [mother's] sister, *they* went, but I went to watch, what they were doing there! [laughs] They went to do those *tinhlanga*, to cut them. . . . I went to watch, truly. They beat me! They always chased me away. When you don't go there to do it, they don't allow you to watch there. They *beat* me. . . . Well, when I reach [home], I say, "I saw her! They're cutting each other!"<sup>60</sup>

For Sara, *tinhlanga* were the principal metonymic differences separating her from the embellished bodies of her "black" mother and sisters. Sara's mother's desire to define her mixed-race daughter as "white"—a status she was not entitled to in colonial law—may have been shaped by her own upbringing on the grounds of the São Jerónimo mission station in Magude town, and would certainly have been reinforced by Sara's attendance at the Catholic primary school in the late 1940s.

Indeed, women's narratives suggest that by this time the place of female body-marking in mission Christianity's definitions of sin and heathenism had converged with Portuguese colonial discourses vaunting the benefits of assimilation while articulating the differences between "civilized" and "native" in increasingly racialized terms.<sup>61</sup> In the aftermath of the 1928 *Indigenato* labor code—a bundle of laws designed to maximize state control over African labor by formalizing the distinction between (white) "citizens" and (non-white) "subjects"—*assimilado* status was regarded by most Africans, according to historian Jeanne Penvenne, as "the best of a bad deal."<sup>62</sup> Available only to those Africans who were literate in Portuguese, had traded "tribal" for European culture, and were engaged in the colonial economy as artisans, traders, or skilled workers, assimilation promised all the rights enjoyed by Portuguese citizens, including exemption from forced labor. While these opportunities were meaningless for the vast majority of the African population (by 1961, less than 1 percent was legally assimilated<sup>63</sup>), it appears that the shadow of this legislation had fallen on Magude by mid-century, so that "white" was a condition to aspire to, and "black" was one to be discarded or despised. Thus for many interviewees who had contact with mission schools or colonial urban centers in their youth, *tinhlanga* embodied all that "civilized" women were supposed to abandon; whether for God or the myth of attainable whiteness, black female skins were to remain smooth and unmarked. This attitude may explain why some women living in the environs of Antioka were wary when I first broached the subject of tattoos. Told that *tinhlanga* were for the "uncivilized," "heathens," or "animals," they were initially afraid to admit any knowledge of the practice.

These disincentives were compounded by the seductive pressures of



South Asian (“Banyan”) shopkeepers who vigorously promoted *xilungu* dress in Magude from the early 1900s on. Yet even women who fondly recalled the rare occasions when they purchased a blouse or *capulana* (length of cotton cloth) insisted that tattoos remained an essential method for beautifying female bodies. In fact, perhaps the greatest irony of *tinhlanga* politics in the colonial period is that the very clothing “civilization” required African girls to wear made it possible for them to conceal the tattoos European dress was supposed to be replacing. Even Valentina Chauke, whose uncle used to check under her clothes every time she came home from playing with her friends, remembered with a chuckle, “They forbade it, . . . but we cut [*tinhlanga*]! We did it by running away—no one at home knew where we were going!”<sup>64</sup> Valentina’s story is especially significant because the girl who cut her tattoos, Ntete Khosa, was the daughter of one of the African pioneers of the Swiss Mission at Antioka.<sup>65</sup> Apparently indifferent to the beatings she got from her father, Ntete—the “doctor of *tinhlanga*” in Facazisse around 1920—used to “go around and gather all the girls” in the area, Christian or not, and persuade them to let her “write” their names on their arms. Such bold defiance of church and paternal orders was not confined to the early years of colonialism. Margarida Khosa and Talita Ubisse, born in the 1930s, portrayed the struggle over girls’ body-marking in even starker terms. Margarida, the daughter of a prominent Swiss Mission family, exclaimed, “Oh, it was *taboo*, for your parents to know! It was forbidden, but I stole, truly!”<sup>66</sup> Talita, Valentina’s daughter and a third-generation Christian, described teachers beating girls they caught with fresh tattoos in the 1950s; yet Talita has a fuller set of *tinhlanga* than her mother, and noted with pride that all three of her daughters are tattooed as well.

How should we interpret girls’ and women’s determination to go on cutting themselves through this period? Rosalina Malungana offered a cynical reading of Christian elders’ efforts to throw the weight of a sternly judgemental God behind what was, on one level, a battle for control over how women made themselves pretty: “Eh! They say, . . . it was a sin. ‘These things, they’re for heathens.’ . . . Ah, but that’s just politics. God, what does he know of these things? What he wants, God wants a person to have a good soul. What you do with your body, he doesn’t care about that.”<sup>67</sup> Few interviewees voiced such bold skepticism; their *tinhlanga*, however, sketch a similarly defiant—though complicated—story. In the thinly settled cattle country of western and northern Magude district, most girls and women went on being tattooed, following the trends described above, through the 1940s and 1950s. Yet contrary to my expectations, tattooing began to decline earlier in these areas than in communities closer to Magude town and other colonial urban centers. Moreover, the shift to

needle-tattooing did not make as significant an impact in these more remote areas. In fact, women's enthusiasm for the "*xilandin*" practice of body-marking—and, paradoxically, their incorporation of *xilungu* materials and methods—seems to have increased in proportion to their exposure to colonial influences. Nearer mission stations and towns, women were more likely to replace *tinhlanga* acquired through "suffering," blood loss, and "strength" (tattoos aimed, in part, to attract male sexual interest) with *tinhlanga* that were less physically risky, more technically sophisticated, and more "beautiful" in appearance than to the touch. The "ancient custom" of women's tattooing, in other words, became both more popular and more "modern"—and less oriented to marriage—as the forces of Portuguese colonialism and mission Christianity stepped up their efforts to anchor their authority in the countryside. This simultaneous reversal and confirmation of European predictions about the "evolution" of African fashion was accomplished by girls and women who were fully aware that their bodies were not only a critical site for the construction of feminine community, but also a key terrain in a colonial contest in which "fellowship" among rural women was more necessary than ever before.

This awareness intensified as the twentieth century progressed, as male migrancy, taxation, forced cash-crop production, and ecological crises sapped the agrarian economy<sup>68</sup> and required women to extend affective networks across as wide an area as possible. As the Nguni shield on Katarina Matuka's side attests, women in southern Mozambique had long been using their skin to mediate the exclusionary claims of a dominant culture; but the power to decide how women would "make themselves beautiful" assumed much higher stakes under Portuguese rule. Tattooed beauty was no longer just about making friends, attracting husbands, or proving one's capacity for masculine valor; under colonialism, it became both part of women's response to the ailing institution of rural marriage and an optic for defining what was "civilized" and what was not. Such definitions had consequences—for marital options, economic prospects, relations with Europeans—even among women who could never hope to qualify for "assimilated" / "civilized" status themselves. Yet precisely because the legal privileges of whiteness were beyond their reach, relinquishing "blackness" was not a desirable option either. Under these circumstances, *tinhlanga* offered a medium for women to conduct their own debate about the dividing line between "white" and "black" ways. Just as Ntete Khosa waged a personal campaign to translate the lessons of mission schooling into a new *tinhlanga* style, women of all ages used tattooing to appropriate elements of the changing world around them without sacrificing the most crucial features of the practice. A woman who had *tinhlanga*, then, was still *xilandin*, and enjoyed the wide-ranging webs of

feminine connection that tattooed female “blackness” entailed. Yet because her *tinhlanga* could include timeless images from the agrarian landscape and writing, flowerpots, and condensed milk, her body proclaimed—with a defiance she could not safely utter aloud—that she was “civilized” and *xilungu* too.

The remarkable tattoo collection of Albertina Tiwana illustrates this relationship between colonialism and female body-marking in Magude. Albertina, who identifies herself as Shangaan, was born c.1910 in Facazisse. She had limited contact with mission schooling, but was raised (by her maternal grandmother, after her father’s death in South Africa) with an awareness of the advantages to be gained from careful involvement with the colonial economy, principally through exchanging crop surpluses for consumer goods at urban shops. Albertina was married in the 1930s, but left her first husband in the early 1940s because of witchcraft allegations from her senior co-wife when she failed to become pregnant. Driven by an “angry heart,” she set off on foot to look for wage work in South Africa, but ended up being hired as a live-in domestic servant for a Swazi woman and her “Banyan” husband in Moamba district, south of Magude. While there, Albertina entered a second, common-law marriage with a man “arranged” for her by her Swazi friend; after a largely long-distance relationship that lasted for over ten years, and that seems to have involved loving and (mutual) beating in equal measure, Albertina returned to her mother’s home in Facazisse, recalling “Yee! Well, I’m tired of it. I don’t *want* a man!”<sup>69</sup> In the mid-1990s, Albertina—who never had children—was living alone in a tiny hut in Facazisse, supporting herself by farming but also relying on regular assistance from a circle of female kin and friends who lent food, water, and labor whenever they could to help Albertina get by.

The *tinhlanga* decorating Albertina’s face, arms, chest, back, and legs combine keloid scars, incised patterns, and needle-drawn images, and bear poignant testimony to the mediated realities of race and gender shaping a life that spans nearly the entire course of Portuguese colonial rule (Figure 9). Albertina’s face bears traces of round *swibayana* markings, done c.1920 with needles and charcoal paste by a young Ndau woman, the granddaughter of refugees from the Gaza civil war who settled near Facazisse in the mid-1800s. In the mid-1920s, an older girl related distantly to Albertina through her paternal grandmother cut a *nxurhana* pattern on Albertina’s torso and large keloid scars on her abdomen and pubic area, copying patterns from Albertina’s elder half-sister and other girls in Machambuyane, the village near Facazisse where she lived with her grandmother. Not long afterwards, while accompanying the wedding party of her mother’s sister to a village about fifty miles to the southwest, Albertina had *makandu* tattoos—uncommon near Magude town, but popular close

Albertina's Tattoos

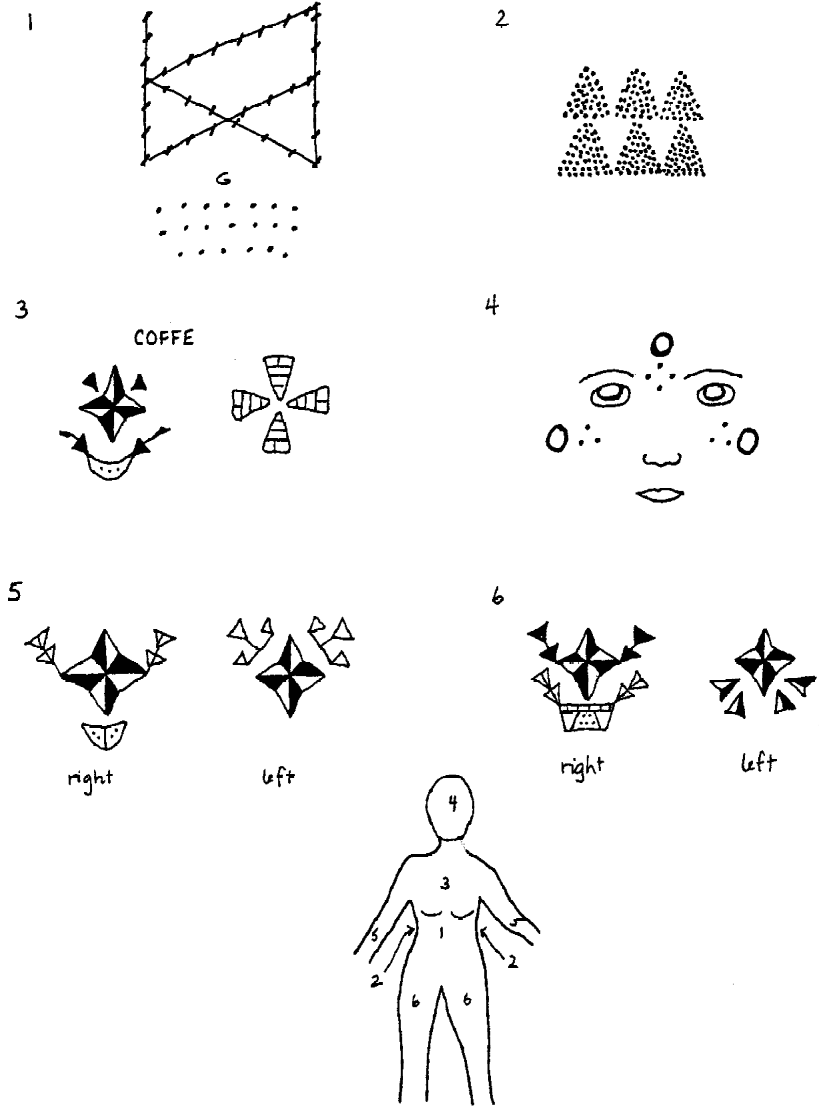


Figure 9

to the South African border—done on her back by the young wife of her aunt's fiancé's brother.

It was after the failure of her first marriage in the early 1940s that Albertina received the elaborate needle tattoos that mark her chest, forearms, and thighs. These *tinhlanga* (which Albertina also calls *swibayana*) were done by her maternal uncle, Mazimbope "Coffe" Tivane, during his visits home from the South African gold mines. After she selected designs from the notebook of tattoos her uncle told her were popular in South Africa and Swaziland—exotic locations for a girl such as Albertina, associated with more affluent "whiteness" than Portuguese Mozambique—Albertina sat through six long sessions while her uncle "wrote" images of flowers, stars, washbasins, birds, and the Blue Cross emblem on her skin. While the greater visibility of these tattoos suggests that Albertina's life has been more thoroughly interwoven with the *xilungu* world than most of her peers, she represents herself as very deeply committed to *xilandin* ways. What tells us most about the meaning of *tinhlanga* for Albertina, though, is the unifying theme in her explanations of her many tattoos. Using the same verb, *kunavela*—to long for, desire, covet, envy—to describe her motivation every time, Albertina plaintively stressed her need to find acceptance and belonging, whether as a pre-pubescent girl, a teenager, or a divorced adult woman. "We studied [tattoos] through our hearts," she explained, and in the process her "heart" became permanently bound to the hearts of others. The older girl who did Albertina's tattoos in Machambuyane, for instance, went on to marry in Facazisse and have a daughter who is today one of Albertina's closest friends. Albertina's *tinhlanga* are not the only tie connecting them, but they represent a memorable, visceral event that these two elderly women can share, a bodily basis for affection and mutual support they joke about even today.

By the late 1960s, *tinhlanga* were falling out of fashion in the Magude area. Interviewees explained that girls began to "abandon" tattooing because *xilungu* schooling and improved state medical services had convinced them that *tinhlanga* were dangerous to a woman's health.<sup>70</sup> Frelimo's ideological campaigns after independence contributed to the devaluation of "tribal" practices that were inconsistent with the Marxist-Leninist government's push for national unity and modernization; and the havoc of the Renamo war made tattooing an indulgence few could afford. Yet in postwar Magude, the stirrings of a tattoo revival confirm the vital role that body-marking has historically played for rural women. In 1996, when I interviewed Unasse Sitoi, a former war captive in her seventies who was still living at Ngungwe, the Renamo base camp that occupied the western fringes of Magude and Moamba districts, she mentioned that she had begun tattooing younger female captives in the early 1990s as a way to ob-

tain water, firewood, and help in her fields. When Mozambique's national elections in 1994 instilled a sense of stability even in this state-forsaken corner of the countryside, the girls of Ngungwe, according to Unasse, began walking back and forth across the South African border to visit relatives living in the refugee communities of the Transvaal. When they came back, newly conscious of their status as members of transnationally scattered families—many of whom would like to relocate permanently in South Africa—they told Unasse that “over there, the girls, they don't cut tattoos. And we, we won't cut *tinhlanga* now either.”<sup>71</sup>

In Magude town, the situation was different. In the peri-urban settlements where displaced women of all ages and points of origins were still crowded in ramshackle shelters, supporting children and parents and, often, unemployed husbands through backbreaking work in borrowed fields, survival depended on one's ability to court extensive networks of friends and kin. Here, *tinhlanga* were staging a much-discussed comeback, and mothers had begun to watch their daughters for signs of “cutting” when they returned home from the Nkomati River. Conversations about tattooing in these two distant points of the district in the mid-1990s oddly echoed the reminiscences of women who “beautified” their bodies with *tinhlanga* during the colonial period. Future research may find that their repertoire of designs and instruments have changed with the reconfigured identities of the postwar world, but what stood out at the moment of *tinhlanga*'s resurgence in Magude was their enduring value as a means of feminine outreach and historical remembrance, an ineffable record of women's experience in a land still trying to recover from the “scars” of European rule.

## Conclusion

Women in the Magude area have used tattoos to re-“write” boundaries of difference—most strikingly, ethnic and racial difference—and build ever-wider female communities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet it was the transformed meanings of female beauty in the colonial period that most dramatically highlighted the contradictory powers of *tinhlanga* for rural women. Surrounded by Christian discourses, Portuguese notions of racial identity, and the battery of practices—literacy, commodified food, potted plants—through which colonialism sought to enact its authority, girls and women used *tinhlanga* to claim more inclusive grounds of common experience and affiliation. Their efforts, preserved in personal narratives and in the scars themselves, manifest four important tensions in women's lives under Portuguese rule. First, while the cutting of tattoos was shrouded in secrecy, and “civilized” dress supplied a

useful layer of concealment for illicitly tattooed bodies, *tinhlanga* were intended to be seen, their assertions of history and *xilandin* identity bolder—because more permanent—than the disposable accessories of *xilungu* culture. Second, perhaps because of the very boldness of tattooing's claims, women's stories about *tinhlanga* are wrapped in secrecy of another kind: an unwillingness, or inability, to articulate their full historical significance. Reticent when asked to explain changes documented in plain view on their skin, women preferred to use the inscribed memories of *tinhlanga* to prove the strength of their bodies and the resilience of "traditional" practices in the face of colonial pressures to become "civilized" and "modern."

And yet, third, in the most telling irony of all, if the persistence of tattooing exposed the incompleteness of European power, it was the female casualties of colonial society who drew most extensively on *xilungu* materials and designs, engaging and adapting colonial culture as they transformed the practice of tattooing to preserve its place—and theirs—in a changing world. In this sense, Albertina Tiwana's embrace of South African *tinhlanga* styles in the 1940s resembles Ntete Khosa's daring use of *xilungu* letters on the arms of Antioka girls in the 1920s. Remembered by Valentina Chauke as a "prostitute" because she "ran around with men" and never had children, Ntete deviated from both local and colonial, Christian gender norms. Like Albertina, who has struggled since childhood in conditions of intensifying economic hardship to patch together the kind of family life her "heart" desires, Ntete may have seen *xilungu*-inspired tattoo innovations as a way to retain female friendships that her colonial connections were threatening to destroy. While each woman's life was enmeshed with a different facet of colonial power—Ntete with mission Christianity, Albertina with commerce and mining capital—the stakes of their respective battles seem very much the same.

Finally, if the ultimate value of *tinhlanga* lay in their role as a medium for girls and women to forge chains of feminine fellowship that transcended boundaries of clan, marriage, class, ethnicity, race, even nationality, how do we explain the memories of competition, envy, and ridicule motivating the decision to be cut? Why, indeed, go to such painful lengths for the sake of beauty and friendship at all? Perhaps the bonds formed through suffering are truer, and more potent, because of the self-sacrifice they entail; perhaps the price of female community is so high because of the centrifugal forces against it in a male-dominated world, or because the price of living without it is comparably great. Either way, *tinhlanga* represent a hard-won feminine victory, a declaration that the respect and approval of one's fellows are more enduring than individual fear, colonial power, or the desires of men. Exhibiting tattooed skin as evidence that they are any-

thing but victims, the women of Magude embody truths of Mozambique's colonial history—truths we would not have access to any other way.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>E. Dora Earthy, *Valenge Women: The Social and Economic Life of the Valenge Women of Portuguese Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 102.

<sup>2</sup>Hildi Hendrickson, ed., *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996); Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999); Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991); and Luise White, *Speaking With Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup>Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 25. Ann Laura Stoler's work on colonial South East Asia, and particularly the critique of Foucault developed in her book, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), has provided a stimulating link between Foucault's work and African colonial history.

<sup>4</sup>There is a large literature on female genital excision, but this body-altering practice lacks the graphic dimension of tattooing, and does not lend itself to analysis as text in the same way. See, for example, Janice Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Susan Pedersen, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-Making," *Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991): 647–80; and Lynn M. Thomas, "'Ngaitana (I will circumcise myself)': The Gender and Generational Politics of the 1956 Ban on Clitoridectomy in Meru, Kenya," *Gender and History* 8, no. 3 (1996): 338–63.

<sup>5</sup>Recent examples include Jane Caplan, ed., *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Alfred Gell, *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Frances E. Mascia-Lees and Patricia Sharpe, eds., *Tattoo, Torture, Mutilation, and Adornment: The Denaturalization of the Body in Culture and Text* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); and Margot Mifflin, *Bodies of Subversion: A Secret History of Women and Tattoo* (New York: Power House Cultural Entertainment, 1997).



<sup>6</sup>Frances E. Mascia-Lees and Patricia Sharpe, "The Marked and the Un(re)marked: Tattoo and Gender in Theory and Narrative," in *Tattoo, Torture, Mutilation, and Adornment*, 147.

<sup>7</sup>I use the term "tattoo" to refer to indelible marks made on the body either by puncturing the skin and using needles to insert pigment below the dermis or by cutting the skin and rubbing pigment into the wound to produce dark fibrous tissue which remains as a permanent, tactile scar. The latter method is also called "cicatrization" or "scarification." "Keloid" tattoos are very thick scars resulting from the excessive growth of fibrous tissue, often caused by repeated openings and colorings of the wounds. Some scholars differentiate between needle-punctured markings they call "tattoos" and other forms of irreversible body-marking such as scarification (Caplan, *Written on the Body*, xi). My decision to use "tattoo" generically reflects the usage of women in Magude, who referred to all body-markings as *tinhlanga*.

<sup>8</sup>"*Tinhlanga*" is the plural of "*nhlanga*," which R. Cuenod defines as "cicatrisation for ornament." See R. Cuenod, *Tsonga-English Dictionary* (Braamfontein: Sasavona Press, 1991). However, I heard "*nhlanga*" used only to refer to a single cut or scar; since all tattoo designs consist of multiple cuts, the term "*tinhlanga*" is used for "tattoo" in both singular and plural contexts.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Valentina Chauke, 27 June 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Talita Ubisse, 27 June 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>11</sup>For the history of the Gaza Nguni kingdom, see Lisa A. Brock, "From Kingdom to Colonial District: A Political Economy of Social Change in Gazaland, Southern Mozambique, 1870–1930," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1989); and Gerhard Liesegang, "Notes on the Internal Structure of the Gaza Kingdom of Southern Mozambique, 1840–1895," in *Before and After Shaka: Papers in Nguni History*, ed. J. Peires (Grahamstown: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, 1981).

<sup>12</sup>There has been much debate about the origins of Tsonga ethnicity. The term originated as a derogatory label used by the Gaza Nguni and Europeans to describe the various peoples subjected to Gaza rule. Today, "Tsonga" is the official umbrella category for three of the main ethno-linguistic groups of southern Mozambique—Shangaan, Ronga, and Tswa. Magude's population is predominantly Shangaan-speaking. See Patrick Harries, "The Anthropologist as Historian and Liberal: H.A. Junod and the Thonga," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (1981): 37–50; and Alan K. Smith, "The Peoples of Southern Mozambique: An Historical Survey," *Journal of African History* 14, no. 4 (1973): 565–80.

<sup>13</sup>Renamo was the Mozambique National Resistance, a guerrilla movement formed by the Rhodesian government in the mid-1970s to destabilize independent Mozambique. William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), and Alex Vines, *RENAMO: Terrorism in Mozambique* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup>I borrow this useful term from Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon*.

<sup>15</sup>Xivongo (clan) praises and clan historical traditions so thoroughly privilege men's actions (chiefly politics, war) that most women refused to recall these narratives, claiming they didn't "know" them or dismissing them as "men's business." Heidi Gengenbach, *Tales of the Heart, Memories of the Body: Women Telling History in Magude, Mozambique* (New York: Columbia University Press and the American Historical Association, forthcoming), chap. 2.

<sup>16</sup>Janet Spector, *What This Awl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup>William M. White, *Journal of a Voyage Performed in the Lion extra Indianan, from Madras to Colombo and Da Lagoa Bay . . . in the Year 1798* (London, 1800), 27.

<sup>18</sup>Gerhard Liesegang, "Lourenço Marques antes de 1895: Aspectos da História dos Estados Vizinhas, da Interação entre a Povoação e Aqueles Estados e do Comércio na Baía na Povoação," *Arquivo 2* (1987): 53.

<sup>19</sup>Albasini ruled as a "white chief" over these refugees, who were fleeing from famine, warfare, and Nguni military conscription. See Junod, "The Ba-Thonga of the Transvaal," 222; and Roger Wagner, "Zoutpansberg: The Dynamics of a Hunting Frontier, 1848-67," in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London: Longman Press, 1980).

<sup>20</sup>Jane Caplan, "'Speaking Scars': the Tattoo in Popular Practice and Medico-Legal Debate in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *History Workshop Journal 44* (autumn 1997): 107-42.

<sup>21</sup>H.A. Junod, *La Tribu et la Langue Thonga* (Lausanne, 1896), 16-17, and H.A. Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe* (2d. ed., London, 1962), I, 178-79.

<sup>22</sup>Junod, *La Tribu et la Langue Thonga*, 17, and Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe* I, 179.

<sup>23</sup>St. Vincent Erskine, "Journey of Exploration to the Mouth of the River Limpopo," *Journal of the Royal Geographic Society 39* (1869): 238.

<sup>24</sup>Frederick Elton, "Journal of an Exploration of the Limpopo River," *Journal of the Royal Geographic Society 42* (1872): 37.

<sup>25</sup>Earthy, *Valenge Women*, 107. Earthy described the VaLenge as a group of mixed Shangaan-Chopi origins.

<sup>26</sup>H. A. Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe* (1st ed., Neuchatel: Attinger Frères, 1913), I, 180. See also Earthy, *Valenge Women*, 105-6. Later Portuguese anthropologists produced more blatantly evolutionist studies of body-marking. Manuel Simões Alberto, "Mutilações Étnicas entre os Negros de Moçambique," *Boletim da Sociedade de Estudos de Moçambique*, 25, 90 (1955): 35-44.

<sup>27</sup>José Fonseca, "Monografia da Tribo Cossa," Inhambane, 1957 (Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, Seção Especial a.III, p.6, no. 28).

<sup>28</sup>Earthy, a British national, worked in Mozambique for the Society for the Preservation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

<sup>29</sup>Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, I, 178–181; E. Dora Earthy, “On the Significance of the Body Markings of Some Natives of Portuguese East Africa,” *South African Journal of Science* 21 (1924): 573–87. Here Earthy draws on her findings among Chopi, Shangaan, Lenge, and Ndau women.

<sup>30</sup>Earthy, “On the Significance of the Body Markings of Some Natives of Portuguese East Africa.”

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 577. See also Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, I, 180.

<sup>32</sup>Earthy, “On the Significance of the Body Markings of Some Natives of Portuguese East Africa,” 577–78.

<sup>33</sup>Interview with Cufassane Munisse, 3 November 1995, Magude town.

<sup>34</sup>Interview with Talita Ubisse, 27 June 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Valentina Chauke, 30 December 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Teasse Xivuri, 18 August 1995, Magude town.

<sup>37</sup>Interview with Lucia Ntumbo, 22 September 1995, Nhiuana (Phadjane).

<sup>38</sup>For a sensitive discussion of beauty in one African context, see Sylvia Ardyn Boone, *Radiance From the Waters: Ideals of Feminine Beauty in Mende Art* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986).

<sup>39</sup>The pioneering piece on rural women is Sherilynn Young, “Fertility and Famine: Women’s Agricultural History in Southern Mozambique,” in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, eds., *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). For female rural-to-urban migration, see Jeanne Penvenne, “Seeking the Factory for Women: Mozambican Urbanization in the Late Colonial Era,” *Journal of Urban History* 23, no. 3 (1997): 342–79. For a critique of the “women left behind” model, see Karen Jochelson, “Women, Migrancy and Morality: A Problem of Perspective,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21 (June 1995): 323–32.

<sup>40</sup>Women’s trade usually involved clay pottery, which was exchanged for grains. Some post-war nostalgia may be at work here, but European travellers’ accounts confirm women’s mobility during this period. Alfredo Freire de Andrade, “Explorações Portuguezas em Lourenço Marques e Inhambane,” *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* 13 (1894): 332.

<sup>41</sup>Interview with Aldina Masangu, 28 June 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Albertina Tiwana, 19 December 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Melina Xivuri, 5 December 1995, Muqakaze (Moamba district). *Kunyangana* means to seek or choose carefully, examine, appraise, look with great pleasure at someone or something (Cuenod, *Tsonga-English Dictionary*).

<sup>44</sup>See Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, I 184–85, 187; II 47.

<sup>45</sup>Significantly, *ngati* is used to refer to blood and menstrual flow.

<sup>46</sup>See Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, I 201, and II 360, 416, 489, 512, and chap. II on "Thonga Folklore"; H.P. Junod, *Vuithari bya Vatsonga*, proverbs 943, 1127, 1414, 1418; and Cornelius T.D. Marivate, "Tsonga Folktales: Form, Content and Delivery," 2 vols., (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1973). These beliefs are still widespread in Magude.

<sup>47</sup>Here, tattooing recalls the intragenerational dynamics of clitoridectomy described in Thomas, "'Ngaitana (I will circumcise myself).'"

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Rosalina Malungana, 19 November 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Rosalina Malungana, 26 November 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>50</sup>Interview with Lucia Ntumbo, 22 September 1995, Nhiana.

<sup>51</sup>Interview with Rosalina Malungana, 19 November 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>52</sup>Paulus Gerdes, *Women, Art, and Geometry in Southern Africa* (Trenton: African World Press, 1998) explores the mathematical logic behind these tattooing patterns.

<sup>53</sup>Interview with Lídia Chavango, 9 October 1995, Magude town.

<sup>54</sup>Interview with Albertina Tiwana, 19 December 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Interview with Lise Nsumbane, 29 June 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>57</sup>Interview with Juliana Kwinika, 30 June 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>58</sup>Interview with Valentina Chauke, 28 February 1996, Facazisse.

<sup>59</sup>Interview with Sinai Mundlovu, 4 March 1996, Facazisse. Rosalina Malungana directed me to the relevant Biblical passage in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.

<sup>60</sup>Interview with Sara Juma, 25 October 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>61</sup>See Bridget O'Laughlin, "Class and the Customary: The Ambiguous Legacy of the *Indigenato* in Mozambique," *African Affairs* 99 (January 2000): 5–42; and Jeanne M. Penvenne, "'We Are All Portuguese!' Challenging the Political Economy of Assimilation, Lourenço Marques, 1870–1933," in Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

<sup>62</sup>Jeanne M. Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877–1962* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995), 467.

<sup>63</sup>Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1983), 40.

<sup>64</sup>Interview with Valentina Chauke, 30 December 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>65</sup>Ntete's father was Nyanga Khosa, who with his younger brother Daniel

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returned to Magude from the Transvaal in the 1890s to help the Swiss establish the Antioka station. See Jan van Butselaar, *Africains, Missionnaires et Colonialistes: Les origines de l'Église Presbytérienne du Mozambique (Mission Suisse), 1880–1896* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984).

<sup>66</sup>Interview with Margarida Khosa, 5 July 1995, Makuvulane.

<sup>67</sup>Interview with Rosalina Malungana, 19 November 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>68</sup>See Young, "Fertility and Famine;" Penvenne, "Seeking the Factory for Women;" Allen Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938–1961* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1996).

<sup>69</sup>Interview with Albertina Tiwana, 14 October 1995, Facazisse.

<sup>70</sup>Interviews with Talita Ubisse, 27 June 1995, Facazisse; Lucia Ntumbo, 22 September 1995, Nhiuana.

<sup>71</sup>Interview with Unasse Sitoi, 28 October 1995, Ngungwe.

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