THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING HONEST: VERIFYING CITATIONS, REREADING HISTORICAL SOURCES, AND ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY IN THE GREAT KARAMOJA DEBATE

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I

Anthropologists pay considerable attention to the writing style, the construction of a text, and the question of ethnographic authority, particularly since Derek Freeman's critique of Margaret Mead's Samoa writings. Although the issue of representation of the history and culture of far-flung peoples in the form of the written report is a long and distinguished tradition in the field of cultural anthropology, the Freeman/Mead debates have raised a number of questions ranging from the problem of faulty citation practices to the issue of vulnerable ethnographic authority. The debate over Freeman's critique of Mead has developed into a major controversy and was featured at the 1983 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (Marshall 1993:604). Since then, numerous articles and books have been written on the debate, and while many people have become tired of the "whole mess", the case continues to attract scholarly attention.

Critiques of Freeman often revolve around the sources Freeman used to support his historical argument against Mead, illuminating how Freeman used rhetorical devices, selectively omitted vital passages in historical documents that he cited, and "heavily" used partial quotations and (sometimes) ellipses, in order to "...undermine Mead's ethnographic authority and enhance his own" (e.g., Marshall 1993:604).

The Freeman/Mead debate underscores how important it is for authors to get their references right (Shankman 2006), since failing in this not only undercuts the ethnographic authority of the scholars, but it also distorts the historical and cultural representations of ethnographic communities under

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investigation. Since the elusive discourse surrounding citation practices is typically beyond the purview of the readers, any scholar is at risk of being victimized. The question is how we can be insured against such malpractice. Should we trust authors to provide the necessary citations correctly, or should we test their conclusions by examining the cited sources?

II

Recently, I happened to read a book entitled *The Vitality of Karamojong Religion: Dying Tradition or Living Faith?* and I was struck by how Ben Knighton, the author, adopted practices that match—and perhaps surpass—those of Freeman's. Knighton discusses my work (Mirzeler/Young 2000; hereafter MY2000) that I co-authored with Crawford Young about the impact of the AK-47 on Karamojong culture and people.[1] Knighton (2005:127) writes that we stated that "[h]istory is simple when it all turns on a single event. Before 1979, Karamoja was peaceful, pastoral and traditional, but that year ushered in the 'new era' of guns (Mirzeler and Young 2000: 409)."

Knighton also argues that MY2000 neglects the history of guns in the region, and that Karamojong have "enculturated" them into their culture like any other iron implement. Throughout his book Knighton uses both ethnographic and historical sources to suggest that MY2000's portrayal of the Jie of northern Uganda—particularly the impact of guns, warlord politics, and the discussion of Nakapor, the current Jie firemaker (politico-religious leader)—is fatally flawed, and that I was deceived by Lodoch, one of the Jie storytellers, whom I worked with during my field research. This is a perfectly legitimate view to bring to the table, but only as long as it is defended appropriately. Here I illustrate how far short of this standard Knighton's arguments fall.

Knighton often omits relevant historical works, and frequently cites relevant scholarship only with brash but strategic selectivity. Thus he relies heavily on constructed quotations and decontextualized partial quotations, and rarely uses ellipses to indicate that they are partial quotations. An examination of Knighton's text shows that these are not due merely to carelessness, but are carefully deployed to undermine my own argument in order to enhance his own case.

Equally problematic is the way in which Knighton deploys oral data. He is inconsistent in giving information about his informants; he mentions only very few informants by name; and he does not reveal background information as to when and how the oral testimonies were collected. Most impor-

[1]I want to thank Crawford Young for allowing me to speak on his behalf in this paper.

tantly perhaps, Knighton does not indicate anywhere when and where he will make his oral evidence available for public review.

Without such indications, oral testimonies become unverifiable assertions that Knighton uses for all sorts of arguments, citing only nameless informants who are numbered with an initial of their tribal identity. Knighton uses such informants, for instance, to deny the existence of Nakapor as the firemaker of the Jie people. Although I have written about Nakapor (Mirzeler 1999; 2004), discussing some of the controversies surrounding his politico-religious position, Knighton remains silent about these issues, even while citing my 2004 work in his bibliography in his book published in 2005. Knighton discusses this issue in his 2006 paper.

The soundness of Knighton's case can be evaluated only by examining the sources which he uses to build his argument. Hence a re-examination of these sources can be helpful in understanding how Knighton uses his sources to build his case and strives to set himself up as the authoritative scholar of all matters relating to Karamojong, and might have a larger minatory value as well.

Knighton's work and field observations, unlike mine, confirm the observations of other authorities regarding the Karamoja, and he makes it clear that the Karamojong culture and history remotely resemble and confirm my descriptions and interpretations. In my examination of Knighton's work, I will try not to belabor the question of who is 'right' and who is 'wrong' about Karamojong culture and history. I am satisfied to provide readers with an opportunity to learn more about Knighton's sources and to test his credibility. I feel that such an examination can provide a useful case to illuminate how scholars, through rhetorical language and faulty citation practices, can present a picture that can be well estranged from reality.

III

Published in 2005, Knighton's book is about Karamojong society, culture, history, and religion. Karamoja is a vast semi-arid plateau located in northeast Uganda, and is home to a number of pastoralist communities, largely known as Karamojong. The region has been characterized by environmental scarcity and insecurity since at least the early colonial times. Cattle-raiding and warfare among communities between the bordering districts, and across newly-established international boundaries, have frequently been noted by observers (Mkutu 2006). While Karamoja was largely marginalized, and was even declared a closed district for many years under the British colonial rule, the post-colonial nation state of Uganda has been obsessed with the need to control the region, since the time of Idi Amin, if to little avail.

Knighton's book consists of nine chapters on a variety of aspects of Karamoja life. As Tim Allen (2006:434) points out, the book is less about religion than it is about local tradition, and is devoted to warriors and local warfare and how traditional pastoral life is being revitalized rather than undermined. Knighton sees himself as defending the Karamojong from the negative perspective of "educated" scholars, who in his view fail to understand Karamojong traditions. For him, in contrast to "educated" perspectives of postmodern scholars, guns had not spoiled the coherence of traditional ways of life; rather they have become "enculturated" into Karamoja society. While Knighton (2005:77) attacks the representation of Karamoja by these "educated people", such as Gray (2000), Mirzeler and Young (2001), and Mkutu (2003), for being based on causal acquaintance, he defends earlier anthropologists such as Gulliver, and particularly John Lamphear (a historian) who studied the oral tradition of the Jie people, for humanism not found in later writers. Knighton has little good to say about scholars who have worked in the area within the last ten years or so, as he seeks to vindicate the Karamojong from negative stereotypes that he feels such people have propagated.

As his reviewers have pointed out, aside from chapter 5, most of the book contains "somewhat disembodied discussion of 'Vanishing tribes'" (Allen 2006: 434) or a "romanticized picture of Karamojong religion, cosmology, and culture" (Mkutu 2006:310). Hodgson (2006:522, emphasis in original), for instance, notices this, and finds some of Knighton's "analytic methods troubling," and maintains that "rather than just showing evidence of parallels between contemporary and historical practices (which stills [*sic*] leaves unanswered the question of whether they mean the same thing then and now), Knighton sometimes describes a practice, name or belief cited in a much earlier secondary source as a contemporary practice." Nevertheless, Knighton's book is an important source on the Karamojong people. Here I focus primarily on chapter 5, where Knighton critiques self-styled postmodern interpretations, and I examine some of Knighton's sources regarding this critique.[2]

IV

While Hodgson has noted how Knighton uses old ethnographic materials while addressing contemporary issues, Mkutu has explored yet another aspect of Knighton's troubling methodology. Her review of Knighton's book, for instance, draws attention to the fact that Knighton has omitted relevant observations and existing documentation, such as the works of Fr. Augusto Pazzaglia, that contradict his own interpretation of the impact of

[2]I should mention that many of my observations coincide with those of Kennedy Mkutu (2006).

the proliferation of guns on the Karamojong.[3] According to Mkutu, Knighton not only offers contradictory information about the Karamojong population levels, but he also omits other materials which contradicts his line of argument. Mkutu (2005:308-09) observes that

> Knighton acknowledges the effects of the spread of the gun to some extent, but, in the main, he argues that changes have not been adequately identified and measured and that the gun has perpetuated rather than disrupted tradition. . . Yet as noted by Father Augusto Pazzaglia, who lived in Karamoja from 1966 till 1981, "Raids and murders are constant, and always to the loss of the Karamojong". Documentation from the past five years, detailing a significant death toll and livestock thefts in Karamoja, has not been mentioned or recognized as a humanitarian problem. . .

Mkutu also challenges Knighton's interpretation of power relations between the elders and the younger generations, pointing out his failure to understand the role of "warlord" politics as it relates to Karamoja. Mkutu's correction of Knighton's factual errors, her dispute of Knighton's interpretation of the impact of guns on the Karamojong, and Knighton's failure to exploit important sources such as Fr. Pazzaglia's testimony, which should have been essential to his discussion, intrigued me in particular because a few years ago, Knighton had submitted a rebuttal to my work MY2000. There, Knighton had misread our arguments, making similar assertions about the proliferation of guns and power relations between the elders and the younger generations and about warlord politics, as well as about our extension of William Reno's arguments to the Karamoja case, which Mkutu disputes in her review of Knighton's book. Young and I responded, but in the event the editor declined to publish either paper. But the matter did not die there, for I found after a closer reading of Knighton (2005) that he has silently used our response to correct his own arguments, while at the same time challenging MY2000 afresh.[4]

Knighton (2005) refers to MY2000 rather extensively in chapter 5, which, he feels, serves as a refutation of MY2000. His commentary makes a number of interesting points, and I welcome his contribution to Karamoja research. The large geographical scope of northern Uganda, its cultural complexity, and the novelty of some recent events and trends there leave ample room for differences of interpretation, and the debates that might

[3]While there is no standardized spelling of the Karamojong, I will use the word Karamojong to refer to Karamojong people instead of the word Karamojan as we did in MY2000, in order to conform with Knighton's and Kennedy Mkutu's usage of the word, except of course in direct quotations.

[4]For parties interested in the pathology of this debate there is now Knighton (2006).

arise should be valuable. However, when I began to read it closely, I found myself worrying that my short-term memory had deserted me entirely, for I could not remember saying many of the things Knighton was ascribing to me.

As I began to look into the matter further, I gradually realized that on certain key points, Knighton has either misread or misrepresented our analysis in MY2000, and that this could not be entirely unintended. I will focus on those instances where Knighton makes points about warlord politics and the impact of guns on the Karamojong culture. In particular I will focus on several—but by no means all—those points where Knighton quotes or paraphrases MY2000. Finally I will address Knighton's disagreements with me over Nakapor, the contemporary Jie firemaker. My *modus operandi* will be to demonstrate how *tactically* Knighton has managed to misrepresent MY2000 by means of decontextualization and outright mistranscription. In order to indicate Knighton's practices as clearly as possible, I will highlight certain passages and then discuss the issues that arise there from.

V

Here, for instance, is how Knighton (2005:111) describes and questions the core of our argument, reports our presentation of proliferation of guns and "warlord" politics, and delves into the discussion of power relations between the younger generations and elders in Karamoja.

> The postmodern perspective of scholars looking at Karamoja intermittently over the last decade has sought to emphasize discontinuity between the past and present uncertainty. Mirzeler and Young (2000), in an article entitled "Pastoral Politics in the Northeast Periphery in Uganda: AK-47 as change agent", arising out of Mirzeler's research for a PhD dissertation (1999), "Veiled Histories", claim to lift the veil with this central assertion to their argument: "The large-scale infusion of AK-47s after 1979 introduced a new dynamic, again favouring the emergence of warlords and the decline of the elders. The guns, and the power that came out of their barrels, were in the hands of younger men, grouped and led by warlords" (Mirzeler and Young 2000: 419). The argument is retrospective, making the Jie military saviour at the beginning of the last century, Loriang, a "warlord". It is the first time he has been called thus, being styled by [John] Lamphear as "war-leader". The Karamojong, of whom the Jie are but one strong ethnic identity, know no lords.

Knighton then goes into great detail to vindicate Lamphear's interpretation of Loriang as a war-*leader* in opposition to our interpretation, which is really his *reconstructed* allegation, and follows with a lengthy critique and discussion of the interpretations in MY2000, categorizing Mirzeler and Young as "postmodern." MY2000 is based on my fieldwork and on a canvass of relevant secondary documentary sources and oral testimony, in which the names of the informants are unambiguously provided. In addition, MY2000 contains Crawford Young's superb theoretical and methodological insights on African politics as well as his earlier experiences in Uganda. Furthermore, MY2000 parallels that of Sandra Gray's (2000) powerfully argued insights, sustained by extensive fieldwork experience in Karamoja as well as that of Mkutu Kennedy's (2006) interpretations.

According to Knighton (2005), MY2000 does not emphasize "discontinuity between the past and present uncertainty" in the Karamoja. On the contrary, we historicized (MY2000:411) the presence of guns in Karamoja, indicating how "[e]xternal economic and political forces started to impinge upon the area in the latter half of the nineteenth century." Using archival and various other primary and secondary sources, we demonstrated how the first influx of weapons more lethal than spears reached the region. We also discussed how devastating droughts and epidemics in the 1890s triggered a surge of raiding, and how guns such as muzzle-loaders with limited efficiency played a role in this regional dynamic.

Furthermore, we stated (MY2000:412) that "[m]ilitary organization appears to have improved, with the Jie in particular, under war-leader [*sic*!] Loriang, inflicting an epic defeat on well-armed Acholi armies in 1902, and on Dodoth and Karimojong in 1909-10 (Lamphear 1994:75-80)." We indicated (MY2000:427) our position regarding the presence of the gun at the turn of the century in an endnote to our text:

> Lamphear (1976:253-60) argues that the Jie had little interest in guns at this point, their great war-leader [*sic*!] Loriang preferring spears. Mirzeler's interviews with elders suggest a larger role for guns at this time than Lamphear found.

We also discussed (MY2000:413-19) the presence of the gun and politics during the colonial and postcolonial periods, giving ample historical background to our argument about guns and state politics. By ignoring the historical dimensions of our paper, Knighton was more easily able to charge us with emphasizing discontinuity in Karamoja with respect to the proliferation of guns. Readers will notice that when we discuss Loriang as represented by Lamphear, we refer to him as a "war-leader," but we also discuss Loriang's emergence as a "warlord" with respect to the effects of armaments on the contemporary relationship within Karamoja in the 1990s.

We accepted Lamphear's definition of Loriang as a "war-leader" based on information from his fieldwork in 1969/71. In our turn we defined Loriang as a "warlord" instead of a "war-leader" because the Jie people redefined Loriang as such in the contemporary cultural and political context in 1996 and 1997. The fluid nature of oral tradition has been abundantly demonstrated by Africanist scholars and others during the past thirty years. The representation of Loriang in Jie oral tradition has not been static or monolithic. Although we scrupulously preserved Lamphear's interpretation of Loriang, we also included our findings of Loriang's image as a leader during a much different period (the 1990s) in the Jie history.

Stories about Loriang and many other leaders have many different variants, and many of them have been subtly modified, even transformed, since 1969/71. In this process many stories about Loriang and other historical figures have been molded to conform to changing social perceptions of the Jie society. Through these modifications, ordinary people reinterpret their lives and manipulate the images of tradition for contemporary social ends, quite as they constantly reconstruct their past, yet these traditions continue to carry historical information, revealing conditions of the past. Seeing Loriang as a warlord instead of a war-leader in 1996/97 has important implications for understanding the Jie society, and it demonstrates the changes in the mentality of the Jie, which has a direct bearing on the transition towards the militarization of vigilantes and/or elders. The authority of the vigilantes is grounded in the Jie's conformity to traditional values, and they guard not only their communities, but also national boundaries.

Some Jie elders engage in international gun trafficking, and war- and peace- making processes, which prompted us to extend William Reno's warlord argument to the Karamoja case. We are not alone in this. Mkutu (2005:309), for example, notes that

> [a]lthough the use of the term "warlord" in relation to the region has been criticized, it is important to acknowledge that racketeering has contributed to further state weakness and must be addressed in any peace or conflict management attempts, as relates to Karamoja.

VI

As noted, Knighton largely adduces our arguments by failing to quote or paraphrase us correctly. With carefully constructed quotations, Knighton gives voice to Mirzeler and Young, through which both men are seen to confirm whatever Knighton says. The incriminating quotations rearrange themselves into documentary evidence, and they add to a carefully-designed plot to enhance and legitimize Knighton's ethnographic authority in Karamo-

ja scholarship. What is apparent in all of this is that Knighton chooses how we talk about the history of Karamoja, within essentially self-incriminating language. Here I discuss four selected examples of this *modus operandi*. Specific passages are boldfaced in order to better identify the patterns.

In line with his argument, Knighton (2005:117) goes on to tackle the issue of warlord politics, arguing that they are essentially military leaders, rather than warlords:

> In short, Karamojong have nothing in common with others named as warlords around the world seeking commercial gain and state power through the barrel of a gun. Indeed Mirzeler and Young (2000:426) come close to admitting this in finding that the Karamojong are **"not interested in a separatist movement or a national project"**, that they do not threaten the state even though they only give Ugandan sovereignty minimal acknowledgment.

Here Knighton provides only part of a sentence from our text, implying—indeed stating by his use of quotation marks—that the quoted part has been said by us in the exact order, using the exact words. The partially-quoted sentence has been completed with Knighton's statement without using ellipses to indicate that there is more to our text. In any case, we did not use these words in this order and the sentence is not ours. Knighton has reworded our text and *seems* to be referring to the following passage (MY2000: 426):

> **The Karamoja** groups are not animated by a common desire to institutionalise their practical autonomy in **separatist** form; in this sense civil unrest is very different from that in the Ruwenzori mountains, which gave rise to a twenty-year secessionist war (see Rubongoya 1995). Much less do they have any interest in connecting their combat to any larger **national project** or insurgent group; indeed, in some respects, AK-47 warriors are allies of Kampala.

I have no idea why Knighton has cherry-picked certain words from our text, rearranged them, and then added his own words to form a statement that Karamojong are **"not interested in a separatist movement or a national project,"** which—of course—unequivocally supports his views about Karamojong interests. While statements as "much less do they have any interest" and "not interested" are comparable, they are not *exactly* the same; Knighton tinkers with these statements to create a quotation which he then magnanimously attributes to us.

As it is clear from the above direct quotation from our pristine text, Knighton has used the words "**Karamoja**" and "**separatist**" from the first sentence and the words "**national project**" from the second sentence, adding his own word "**not**" and "**movement**", thus deftly creating a new statement that unambiguously articulates what he would like us to have said. What we have written, however, is that Karamojong people are much less interested in connecting their combat to any larger national project. Nor did we write about any "movement."

When Knighton states that "[i]ndeed Mirzeler and Young . . . **come close to admitting**," he creates ambiguity in the minds of the readers, yet the statement "**not interested in a separatist movement or a national project**" indicates we have emended that. What is clear in this whole process is that Knighton has managed to give us credit—via his reconstructed "quoted" sentence—that we do not deserve and do not want, and in the process he has turned that credit into a support for his own ideas about warlord politics. I use this occasion to disown this passage as reconfigured by Knighton and return ownership to him.

VII

Knighton (2005:123) uses a similar approach in incorrectly paraphrasing us, in an effort to support his interpretation of the political relationship between the Karamojong people and the nation-state and to strengthen his argument against our extension of the warlord politics argument to the Karamoja case.

> The traditional politics of the Karamojong keep state government at bay by clever tactics of dissembling and obfuscation, knowing that the government, or its policy, will change. Being an acephalous society, there are no individuals which the state can use for leverage on the society. As Mirzeler and Young (2000:425) rightly note, Karamojong born and bred MPs are guilty of cultural defection purely because of their incorporation into the state. "**Those who cast their lot with the national system to some degree sever their full membership in local society.**"

The quoted statement "**Those who cast their lot with the national system to some degree sever their full membership in local society**" is only one part of a long sentence, but Knighton again fails to use ellipses to indicate that, plucking the statement out of context in order to relocate it in his own. The full statement (MY2000:425) does *not* support Knighton's argument.

> A slowly growing number of educated younger Karamojans enter local government service, and a handful occupy significant posts in

> Kampala; some played a part in the Museveni struggle for power. These are invariably Pian or Bokora (Gray 1999). **Those who cast their lot with the national system to some degree sever their full membership in local society,** ***but their service as intermediary links has value; Lokeris, mentioned at the outset, and MP David Pulkol remain in close touch with Karamoja, and their cultural defection notwithstanding are perceived as useful.*** The other dimensions of the national 'development project' now and then make some worthwhile resource available. For a time, the auxiliary militia, who valued their retainers, internalize some notion of connection to "Uganda".[5]

Knighton conveniently ignores the remaining part of the sentence (italicized above), where we indicated the value of the intermediary services of the Karamojong who enter local government. We even cite the testimony of Lokeris, a Karamojong MP, who mentioned that David Pulkol, another Karamojong MP, remains "in close touch with Karamoja." We do not say—and do not suggest—that Karamojong traditional politics keep state government at bay, nor that Karamojong MPs are guilty of cultural defection.

By paraphrasing our text incorrectly, by quoting it partially, and by practicing silent emendation, Knighton again transforms the meaning of our text and somehow manages to turn it into a statement supporting his own argument. The nature of Knighton's legerdemain is no accident. The amputated part of the quoted sentence seems glaringly misleading since the *complete* sentence fails to provide the evidence that Knighton so desperately needs. Hence he uses a partial sentence to masquerade as a complete one.

VIII

Knighton criticizes our symbolic interpretation of some Karamojong traditions about the metaphorical burial of hoes and spears made from the soil of the sacred Mount Toror, but gives it a literal twist in order to attempt to prove it wrong, using empirical evidence. Knighton (2005:128) maintains that:

> Furthermore, with their observation that the **"people of North-East Uganda** [note 34 is inserted here] **buried the hoe at the beginning of harvest and buried the spear to initiate war"**, they assert that **"the soul of iron ore"** is the **"dominant metaphor for death and life"**. Yet there is no recorded Karamojong custom of burying hoes,

[5]Gray (1999) in this passage refers to an unpublished paper by Sandra Gray entitled "'We Are Running, Running:' Ecological Politics, Local history, and the Evolution of Karimojong Violence."

> [note 35 here] which are just discarded when worn out with use, and spears are only buried to make peace, not war.

Neither the sentence "**people of North-East Uganda buried the hoe at the beginning of harvest and buried the spear to initiate war**" nor the phrases "**the soul of iron ore**" and "**dominant metaphor for death and life**" exist in our text in the tone and order that Knighton "quotes." Nonetheless, we did make statements (MY2000:422-23) comparable to Knighton's sentence and phrases—kind of, sort of anyway. I highlight the words which Knighton lights upon to string together a quoted sentence and phrases:

> A full grasp of the significance of the AK-47 era requires one to explore the cultural discourse induced by automatic weaponry and surrounding its diffusion. Before the arrival of AK-47s in the region, **the soul** (*etau*) **of iron ore** (*elelo*) of Mount Toror was the **dominant metaphor** used for **death and life.** As the hoes made from the ore of Mount Toror ruptured the earth which gave life to the sorghum grain, the spears made from the same ore pierced the bodies of the warriors and released their spirits. Traditionally, **at the beginning of** each **harvest** the **people of northeast Uganda** ceremonially **buried the hoe** which initiated the cultivation of the soil. In the same way, they also **buried the spear** which **initiated** the **war.**

Knighton has chosen and rearranged the highlighted phrases to generate the "quoted" statement "**people of North-East Uganda buried the hoe at the beginning of harvest and buried the spear to initiate war.**" He then misquotes us by writing the phrases "**the soul of iron ore**" and "**dominant metaphor for death and life,**" omitting some words "(*etau*)" and "used" without using ellipses. He writes "North-East" instead of "northeast," introduces the "to", and changes "initiated" to "to initiate."

Soon thereafter Knighton (2005:128) goes into great detail about the use of imported iron in the region to question the idea of the soul of iron ore and the dominant metaphor of death that we articulated in MY2000. Again he misses our point either intentionally or unintentionally. What we said about the soul of iron ore is fairly obviously at the level of metaphor, articulating mere discourse that Karamojong elders used during my fieldwork, to express their discontent with the presence of automatic weapons, as indicated in the statement at the beginning of our paragraph (MY2000:422): "A full grasp of the significance of the AK-47 era requires one to explore the cultural discourse induced by automatic weaponry and surrounding its diffusion." The *etau* (soul) of the spear made from the soil of Mount Toror is

seen as a metaphor of the past, articulating the ideals of justice, social responsibility, and moral actions in warfare and death.[6]

Knighton makes certain assertions in notes 34 and 35 that need to be addressed. In note 34 he maintains that the practice of burying spears and hoes is most likely not a Karamojong, but a Labwor tradition, asserting (Knighton 2005:128n34) that

> The "**people of North-East Uganda**" most likely are not Karamojong at all, but rather Abwor, who are the Lwo-speaking blacksmiths of Karamoja, especially as they [i.e., MY2000] claim that "**spears blessed by the ancient spirits of the iron-makers in Alerek [Labwor] brought victory and justice to those who used them**". The source here is probably Lodoc [*sic*], who is the Jie storyteller around whom Mirzeler's dissertation revolved. He spent a "long time" in Labwor living near the government hospital at Abim, while his father was dying (Mirzeler 1999: 313). He seems to have picked up some Abwor traditions there, which Mirzeler is trying to smuggle into a common Karamojong view.

The statement, without appropriate page number, quoted as "**spears blessed by the ancient spirits of the iron-makers in Alerek [Labwor] brought victory and justice to those who used them**" is not mine, nor can it be found in MY2000. In contrast to Knighton's version, we stated that (MY2000:423):

> War waged by the **spears** made of ore of Mount Toror, and **blessed by the** ancestral **spirits of the iron-makers in Alerek** Hill in **Labwor, brought victory and justice to those who used them** for combat.

Knighton clearly uses the highlighted words and phrases from our text to create his quotation—from whose cloth I once again need to ask. If this is not intended to be a quotation, why has Knighton enclosed the statement with quotation marks? If Knighton is quoting us, why has he skipped some

[6]In contrast to Knighton, John Lamphear made the following point about our metaphoric discussion of the spiritual aspect of the soil of Mount Toror: "I was especially intrigued to see that the same distinction between spears and firearms Sharon Hutchinson describes for the Nuer has spread to Karamojans. By extension, the statement . . . regarding the 'spiritual' aspects of traditional weapons fashioned from the 'sacred' soil of Toror provide valuable support to ideas I'm developing about how depictions of war- and especially attendant levels of perceived brutality- change over time. (The statements are, of course, of special significance as most 'traditional' edged weapons—and other implements—have not been produced from locally-smelted ores for at least the past century.)" Lamphear to Crawford Young, 10 January 2000).

words and phrases, and why does he substitute "ancient" for "ancestral"? Why for that matter, are there brackets around the word Labwor, as if it is his own usage?

The latter part of the above passage might well be construed as a gratuitous and unsubstantiated assumption that challenges both my integrity and that of Lodoch. It is necessary to appreciate that the Labwor and the Jie are, culturally as well as geographically, very close to one another. This was so during my fieldwork in 1996/1997 and during my short visit in 2003 as well as during the time of Lamphear's fieldwork in 1969-1971. As Lamphear (1976:167) puts it:

> . . . many early European visitors believed that the two peoples were historically one tribal group, despite the disparity in their languages and economies. In the words of Labwor informants, however, 'some people have said that the Jie and Labwor are brothers. In fact, both groups have always been separate tribes, but the Jie have always come to us for their iron. Because of iron, the two tribes became friends, until finally they agreed to become even like brothers.'

Considering the very close relationship between the Labwor and the Jie, it is entirely reasonable to expect that many of their traditions are similar, and pointless for Knighton to suggest otherwise.

Knighton (2000:128n35) questions my observations about the Karamojong custom of burying hoes, and he seems to need to corroborate my observations by reference to other scholars' work, such as Fr. Novelli's observation of the Karamojong ceremony of blessing the hoes. While Knighton requires previously-recorded ethnographic evidence to corroborate my findings, he is willing to accept ethnographic findings of other scholars without corroborating written evidence such as that of Novelli's. Ethnographic observations are not always the same. They are different not only because the observers are different people pursuing different answers for different questions, but also because there are multiple "partial truths" in a single ethnographic site (Clifford 1986).

IX

It is difficult to know the authorial motivation of Knighton in introducing silent emendations to his textual sources. However, none of the emendations has been subject to greater attempts at intervention and suppression than that of the voice of Amuk, one of Lamphear's informants. Knighton criticizes MY2000 for stating that the Karamojong people valued their tradition-

al sorghum beer as opposed to sorghum beer made from a new strain of sorghum that was introduced in the 1980s by westerners.

In order to build his case, Knighton goes into great detail about how the Karamojong did not "refuse" beer made from "Seredo" sorghum, introduced from the west, which we did not say. He then goes in equally great detail to explain his involvement in the production of Seredo sorghum in the 1970s, addressing the issue of consumer resistance, after which he quotes the testimony of Amuk in order to demonstrate that the Karamojong most likely did not refuse the sorghum seeds from the west. In order to give a broader context to Knighton's argument, I analyze the sources both in the main text as well as in the footnotes to Knighton's (2005:129) assertions.

> Having been involved in the multiplication of Seredo sorghum, which was introduced in the 1970s from Hubert Doggett's plant-breeding work at Serere in Teso, it is true to say that there was some consumer resistance to our distinctive seed. So taste trials were undertaken. It is quite possible that Seredo beer was not considered 'real ale', [footnote number 37 is inserted here] yet plenty of the hybrid grain was grown, because of its superior yield, especially in drought. The Karamojong have never been utter traditionalists.

Knighton (2000:129) has inserted note number 37 in order to criticize us for something, once again, that we have not said:

> Yet if "**Karamojong will buy sorghum beer before health care**" (Mirzeler and Young 2000: 424), it is preposterous to suggest that Karamojong would refuse it, just because it was made from Seredo sorghum. According to Mirzeler (1999: 410) Serena-type sorghum is distributed as part of the agrarian rites in Kaceri instead of a traditional variety. The special concern is only for the succession of the Jimos fire-maker, who is required not to eat any alien food.

The directly-quoted sentence "**Karamojong will buy sorghum beer before health care**" does *not* exist in our text. We discussed (M/Y 2000: 424) the interactive effects of alcohol and violence, referring to the surge of beer consumption in the region, and we have quoted (MY2000:424) *another scholar's* observation on this issue:

> The interactive effect between alcohol and violence is a universal phenomenon, but is intensified in Karamoja by an apparent surge in beer consumption. Gray (1999) notes that **sorghum beer** "is consumed universally and daily (a commonly voiced complaint of the

> NGOs and the health workers is that the **Karimojong will buy** this liquor before they will pay for **health care**)".

It should be apparent to the readers that Knighton has simply plucked the "sorghum beer," "Karimojong will buy" (changing Karimojong to Karamojong), and "health care" from our text in order to construct the sentence "**Karamojong will buy sorghum beer before health care**." We are not sure why Knighton bothered to make this claim since we did not mention Seredo sorghum *anywhere* in MY 2000. In any case, Knighton can hardly use this passage to support his claim, since it is apparent that Sandra Gray (1999) is talking about sorghum beer in general, not a particular type of seeds—whether Seredo, Serena, or traditional—when she stated that ". . . a commonly voiced complaint of the NGOs and the health workers is that the Karimojong will buy this liquor before they will pay for health care. . ."

Continuing with his constructed argument that the Karamojong would not refuse the sorghum seeds from the west (which we had not suggested), Knighton quotes (2000:129) the testimony of Amuk, one of John Lamphear's informants, as follows:

> Suppose a man comes to Najie from the west with seeds he has borrowed there. Suppose he digs his garden and plants those seeds while the person in the neighbouring garden plants his usual seeds, those of Najie. And lo! The person who has borrowed the new seeds finds that his garden has yielded well. Is he not well-pleased? Will he not say, "These seeds have suited me well!" Will he not continue to use the seeds he has borrowed? (Amuk, quoted by Lamphear 1976:126).

This testimony powerfully punctuates Knighton's view, validating his assertion that the Karamojong did not refuse the seeds introduced from the west. However, when the quoted passage is examined in its proper context–that is, as it appears in Lamphear's book—it is clear that when Amuk says "west" he does not refer to the "west" in the sense Knighton would like readers to believe. The "west" in Amuk's testimony refers to the agriculturalist Acholi who live to the west of the Jie people. Lamphear has quoted Amuk in a section where he talks about how the firemakers of the agricultural Paranilotes were influenced by others during their residence in the west. In order to better contextualize the testimony of Amuk I would like to cite the full testimony as it appears in Lamphear's text (1976:126), highlighting the missing punctuation and three sentences:

> **In the west, the Ngikatapa borrowed the customs of other people, and came with those customs to Najie. It happened like this.** Suppose a man comes to Najie from the west with seeds he has borrowed there. Suppose he digs his garden and plants those seeds while the person in the neighbouring garden plants his usual seeds, those of Najie. And lo! The person who has borrowed the new seeds finds that his garden has yielded well. Is he not well pleased? Will he not say, 'These seeds have suited me well!'? Will he not continue to use the seeds he has borrowed? **It was thus with the Ngikatapa.**

Knighton deftly omits three sentences and some punctuations without alerting readers to this fact. However, those sentences are part of Amuk's testimony, and hence they are part of the evidence. With his silent emendation to the recorded oral text, Knighton fails to preserve the meaning of Amuk's testimony *as it appears in Lamphear's text*. Amuk's testimony is about the seeds from the Acholi people, who live to the west of the Jie people, as opposed to seeds introduced from the west (Europe). Through this silent emendation, Knighton creates powerful testimony to support his argument. Such silent emendation deprives readers of insights into Knighton's editorial strategy to reach certain conclusions that support his arguments. It is interesting that Knighton should use Amuk's testimony which is recorded in Lamphear's text, referring to the period 1969/1971 which is more than twenty years before 1996/1997, when I conducted my fieldwork. How could Knighton critique a contemporary matter using such an old testimony such as Amuk's. As Hodgson (2006: 522) keenly observes, this troubling methodology is used throughout in Knighton's book.

X

Further instances of distorted citations in Knighton's book are all too numerous, but the examples cited here should serve to make it clear why I doubted my own memory before I looked more closely at Knighton's citations to MY2000. Nonetheless, I feel obliged at this point to consider readers' patience and end my litany by relegating to the appendix a few of other examples for those parties who are gluttons for punishment. Still, I would like to conclude by citing a particularly egregious example of the problems I have with Knighton's interpretation of MY2000, and to some extent of the Jie society in general.

This is his treatment of Nakapor, the Jie firemaker. Although the office of the firemaker ceased to exist around the 1950s, it was revived in the mid-

1990s, when Nakapor was appointed (Mirzeler 2004). But Knighton *still* insists that the office does not exist.[7]

In discussing contemporary issues surrounding the firemaker position in Jie, Knighton uses the voices of two mysterious Jie informants—J10 and J13—to dispute my portrait of Nakapor. Unfortunately Knighton does not indicate who J10 and J13 are, nor when and where he conducted interviews with them, nor whether he tape-recorded them, nor whether their testimony is accessible to interested parties. I was able to identify J13 as Lodio at Knighton 2005:141, but I have been unable to determine who J10 was, since the identities of informants are not indicated properly. Knighton mentions the names of only a very few informants and we are left with an ensemble of numbered informants who, we are baldly told, made statements supporting what Knighton writes.

Let me offer the following information in support of Nakapor as the firemaker. I lived next door to Nakapor during my fieldwork in 1996/97, and participated in the performance of the harvest ritual in which Nakapor was the key player as the firemaker. The position of Nakapor as a firemaker was known to me, not only via interviews, but also through constant observation, as well as through the relationship which I built both with Nakapor and with many Jie people in the community. It was a common knowledge that Nakapor was the firemaker. It is true enough that Nakapor's position was contested, a point I have made in Mirzeler 2004.

The only possible reason I can think of why Knighton would take the trouble to claim three times that Nakapor was not a firemaker, might be to contest every aspect of my interpretation of the Jie oral tradition, which includes an analysis of the position of a firemaker. My interpretation of the Jie oral tradition was a revision of Lamphear's interpretation of the same tradition, and I can only guess that this is Knighton's further vindication of Lamphear. It is intriguing that my interpretation has been threatening enough to Knighton, to merit such a distortion.

In his unpublished rebuttal paper Knighton cited two Jie men, Peter Lokiru and Michael Lodio, whom he claimed had told him that Nakapor was not the firemaker. As a direct result of this assertion, I went to Jie land in 2003 and spent two months in the region, during which I conducted tape-recorded interviews with numerous people, including Peter Lokiru—Michael Lodio had already passed away. During this interview in 2003, Peter Lokiru told me that he did *not* tell Knighton that Nakapor was not the firemaker. The following are excerpts from this interview.[8]

[7]Sister Camilla Roach was in Jie land during my fieldwork and witnessed many aspects of Jie society during my fieldwork. In support of my argument, Sr. Camilla Roach has made a statement (personal communication, 8 November 2005) to the same effect. Sr.Camilla's e-mail is: ngolinyang@aol.com.

[8]Interview with Peter Lokiru, 5 July 2003.

> I will tell you the truth as an elderly person in Kotido town. I am a retired civil servant, public servant and now I am doing my own work doing consultancy work . . . Ben Knighton one time came to interview me about the Jie history and more specifically about fire making by the clan of one called Nakapor and supposed to be a royal family in the Koorwakol clanship and family that makes fire for the Koorwakol clan. Yes that is all everybody knows in Jie—that clan which makes fire and Nakapor is the head of the clan and he is the only one who is, as far as I know, makes fire. I do not know any other person as yet was taken over from him . . . As far as meeting Ben Knighton, I do remember he came to my place in the company of a man called David Modo. He came to my house and we sat outside. I was with my family including my wife and we were discussing general things about the history of Karamoja . . .

In his own words then we can see that Peter Lokiru confirmed that Nakapor had been, and still was, the firemaker of the Jie, contrary to Knighton's assertion. I also interviewed David Modo, since he had been present during Knighton's interview of Peter Lokiru. This is what David Modo had to say on that occasion:[9]

> Yes, I am David Modo. As far as I know, I remember that Ben Knighton was my guest and I was with him for about two weeks in Jie in Kotido, Uganda. We made visit casually to Peter Lokiru. And as far as I am concerned I can't remember to have discussed with him with Peter Lokiru about Nakapor as being firemaker but what I heard from the elders is that Nakapor was the fire-maker of the Jie clan...

I also interviewed Lodoch, the Jie storyteller with whom I had worked closely during my original fieldwork. I questioned Lodoch about Knighton's assertion, and asked him to clarify who the firemaker was. Here is what Lodoch had to say:[10]

> After the death of Lotum people kept quiet for a period of time. Later they realized that the traditional performances were not being practiced and that they also had many problems. There were frequent diseases and drought and there was also a lot of raiding-people lost lives . . . When people decided that they should start these

[9]Interview with David Modo, 3 July 2003; Joseph Lomoye from Losilang was present during the interview.

[10]Interview of 6 July 2003 in Losilang, at which I took notes as Lodoch spoke. These handwritten notes I can make available to interested parties.

ceremonies, the elders decided to choose a fire-maker and three names were recommended. The first one was Naletom, the eldest step-brother of Nakapor. The second one was Lomulen, the youngest brother of Nakapor. The third one was Nakapor. People chose Naletom, but he refused to become the fire-maker. He said if I become a fire-maker, I would be restricted to eat the meat of the dead animals and the food from other places, or drink beer from other places. The dietary restrictions were the main reason why he refused.

The people said at that point Lomulen is too young to assume this position so we must offer it to Nakapor, and Nakapor accepted. The Poet people made a new granary for Nakapor in his house. That year all the seven clans of Orwakol collected calabashes full of grains and put it in the granary. During the installation of Nakapor they slaughtered a black ram and they smeared Nakapor with *emunyen* (sacred clay) and gave him the power to smear people with *emunyen* . . . They killed the bull some years later and Nakapor made fire from wet branches and distributed the fire to seven clans. This was done in Moru a Eker. People extinguished all the fire and replaced it with the fire of Nakapor. Even after all this Nakapor does not have the full power because Nakapor's left-handedness. People are trying to bring Lomulen, the youngest brother, to become the fire-maker. The reason they killed a bull to seal Nakapor's installation some years later was because Nakapor was left-handed, and some people were not sure if Nakapor should be a firemaker.

What Lodoch told me in 2003 had already been offered in a tape-recorded interview I conducted with Joseph Lodungokol six years earlier about the ambivalent position of Nakapor. There were some arguments about Nakapor's position being a temporary one, as well as a controversy over his left-handedness.[11] I asked Joseph Lodungokol if he thought the depreciation of Nakapor's power was due to his left-handedness. He also thought that one of the reasons why people did not have much respect for Nakapor was because he was a temporary firemaker due to his left-handedness.

XI

In *The Vitality of Karamojong Religion*, Ben Knighton clearly is hard pressed to persuade his readers of the validity of his own work. Unfortunately, Knighton's rhetorical legerdemain undermines any criticism he might have made about my research.

[11]Interview with Joseph Lodungokol, 23 September, 1996, in Jimos village.

Throughout his book Ben Knighton searches for key statements in MY2000 (and other sources such as Lamphear's works) and, after taking them out of their context, rearranges them to form his own new quotations, while making it look as if he has quoted his sources precisely and accurately, after which he then uses the new and spurious quotations to support his claims against our work. I certainly agree that other scholars working in northern Uganda will differ on numerous points of interpretation. I would like to believe that by the time the reader finishes reading this paper, he/she will realize how faithfully Knighton did—or did not—represent our arguments.

The differences here might seem to be slight, but they serve to betoken Knighton's persistent inability to recognize the purpose of quotation marks and ellipses. I welcome the opportunity to engage Ben Knighton on this issue. After all, critical interchange is the essence of scholarship in general, and scholarly communication in particular. I am sorry that so much of the present paper must be devoted to apparently trivial matters of citation and paraphrase. Yet these are not really trivial after all, since such colloquy can bear fruit only if all parties treat the arguments of other parties fair and squarely and it should be recognized when they do not.

APPENDIX

A

In disagreeing with our extension of warlord politics in Karamoja, Knighton (2005:115-16) states:

> Probably for the first time in African studies, there has been a study of warlords, where none are named or characterized. They are entirely anonymous and shadowy warlords, who move wraith-like on the borders of Sudan and Kenya, where "**large informal markets for weapons and ammunition flourish**" (Mirzeler and Young 2000: 422). A market for semi-automatic rifles, pistols and ammunition is reported and these are allegedly "**controlled by *kraal* leaders or warlords from Sudan and Kenya as well as Karamojans**".

The statement "**large informal markets for weapons and ammunition flourish**" does not exist in our text as it is quoted by Knighton. Rather, he has taken the trouble to omit "where" and "are sold" and he has added "for." Nor he has bothered to use ellipses to indicate that he quoted only a part of the sentence. The full sentence (MY2000:422) indicates where weapons and ammunitions are sold, giving regional contextual information:

> **Large informal markets where weapons and ammunition** are sold **flourish** in remote locations in the border areas with Sudan and Kenya, as well as in some villages on the distant outskirts of Moroto town, near Kaabong in Dodoth country, and in Koteen, and Magos hills in the grazing land, near the Uganda escarpment.

Whereas Knighton has critiqued us for not identifying the warlords, it is apparent that we have given regional information, thus characterizing the ethnic and national backgrounds of the warlords, while keeping their names, and hence their identity, confidential.

Knighton's statement "**controlled by kraal leaders or warlords from Sudan and Kenya as well as Karamojans**" never existed in our text either; once again, Knighton has reworded our text to make it appear as if he is quoting directly. What we wrote (MY2000:422) was:

> The **control** of these markets is in the hands of **kraal leaders or warlords from Sudan and Kenya, as well as Karamojans.**

Knighton has changed "control" to "controlled" and has adroitly omitted "The" and "of these markets is in the hands of."

B

Knighton (2005:130) introduces the following "quotes" to launch a critical debate against our interpretation of the metaphoric significance of guns in the Karamojong culture and history. The direct quotes in Knighton's book appear in the following manner:

> Mirzeler and Young (2000:423 [*sic* 424]) conclude that 'the escalated armament has intensified local conflict within Karamoja':
> The culture of the gun, and the cultural changes triggered by the omnipresence of the AK-47 pretend far-reaching changes in social relationships, which are only beginning to work themselves out. The equilibria, which have sustained Karamojong survival in a taxing environment, and their normative embodiment, seem at risk. The soulless AK-47 is eating away at the soul of Karamojong culture.

The sentence "**the escalated armament has intensified local conflict within Karamoja**" and the quoted passage beneath it belong to two different sections displaying two different ideas. Textually then the above quoted matter has three problems: sequence, content, and context. Anyone comparing the two passages would notice that the quoted materials are transposed

and taken out of context. In order to illustrate this, I would like to present our text within its proper context (MY2000:424):

> Intoxicated men and women staggering on the roadside or in market places are a common sight, with drunken men firing their AK-47s into the sky. An American Catholic relief worker in the area, Sister Camilla Roach, told us that, "seeing children with plastic containers selling local beer on the roadside to the people who are searching for guns and ammunition amidst reeking corpses is frightening to me".
>
> **The culture of the gun, and the cultural changes triggered by the omnipresence of the AK-47, portend far-reaching changes in social relationships which are only beginning to work themselves out. The equilibria which have sustained Karamojan survival in a taxing environment, and their normative embodiment, seem at risk. The soulless AK-47 is eating away at the soul of Karamoja culture.**
>
> **The escalated armament has intensified local conflict within Karamoja.** The pattern of conflict not only reproduces rivalries regarded as historically rooted, but pits groupings which once regarded themselves as allies against one another. Norms of social peace tend to shrink back to quite localised levels. Ambushes of travellers on the roads are frequent; during Mirzeler's stay near Kotido, a month never passed without tales of fatalities of those journeying along the road to Moroto.

Knighton's distortion of the sequences of the sentences from our text is obvious, and raises a set of points that are broadly interesting. Knighton has cut a sentence from the second paragraph and he has placed it above the first paragraph in another section that we partitioned to indicate different sections of the text. By choosing to arrange the sequences of the text in this way, Knighton has tampered with our original text. Could his decision have been accidental, or was it purposeful? Did Knighton not notice that the sentences belong to two different paragraphs in two separate sections of MY 2000 or did he overlook the fact that the sentence he cut from the second paragraph is the beginning sentence of a section in the paper that delineates the impact of guns, based on my fieldwork observations, while the first paragraph is a part of a section which discusses the interactive effects between alcohol, guns, and violence on Karamojong culture is based on other scholars' and observers' comments?

First, by taking the single sentence "**the escalated armament has intensified local conflict within Karamoja**" from the second paragraph and

placing it above the first paragraph with a colon added, Knighton makes the sentence look as if it were a thesis, while the first paragraph below the colon has been changed into some form of supporting evidence, an elaboration, and an answer to the thesis. In this calculated exercise Knighton has created a relationship between two separate ideas that does not exist in MY2000.

Secondly, by cutting and pasting a sentence from the second paragraph and placing it above the first paragraph, Knighton decontextualizes the text, in the process neatly eliminating our broader discussion of the impact of the guns in the region, and reducing our points of view to a set of meaningless statements. By so doing, he is able to construct a critical straw-man argument against our interpretation of the impact of AK-47s on Karamojong culture.

Besides the distortion of the sequence of the sentences, there is also the problem of content. Anyone reading the passages in question as they appear in Knighton's book would recognize the changes of the words, spelling, and punctuation that have been introduced to MY 2000 by silent emendation, further transforming the meaning. These changes present a distorted picture to the readers. Nowhere in our text, for instance, have we indicated that ". . . the omnipresence of the AK-47 **pretend** far-reaching changes in social relationships . . ." Instead we naturally used the word **portend**. Of course replacing "portend" with "pretend" only distorts our text and its meaning as well as creates the impression that we practiced sub-standard English. Nor did we use the word "**Karamojong**," but rather "Karamojan." Additional punctuation has been carelessly introduced into—but also omitted from—our text.

C

Acting as though MY2000 did not talk about the history of guns in general in Karamoja, Knighton goes on to explain that there is nothing new about guns, presumably to undermine our discussion of the impact of AK-47s on the Karamojong. Here is what Knighton (2005:128) says about guns in general:

> There is nothing very new about the gun, for it has been present since the 1870s. The colonial government licensed some, and there have always been at least a few illicit guns, however secretly traded in. The northern Turkana were never thoroughly disarmed, so they provided a constant potential supply of guns from Ethiopia. Failing that, Karamojong would manufacture some out of pipes. These are known as *ngamatidai*, closely connected in name to iron hoes with v-shaped handles *ngimatidoi* (Wilson 1973b:91).

Here Knighton paraphrases Wilson incorrectly. The citation of Wilson by Knighton immediately after his discussion of *ngamatidoi* might well lead readers to imagine that the information about the homemade guns comes from Wilson, yet there is no such information at the place cited, where Wilson mentioned only that *Ngimatidoi* is a v-shaped hoe handle.

D

Knighton (2005:127) goes on to paraphrase our text (MY2000:409) in the following manner:

> History is simple when it all turns on a single event. Before 1979, Karamoja was peaceful, pastoral and traditional, but that year ushered in the "new era"of guns (Mirzeler and Young 2000: 409).

Yet again the ham-handed paraphrase is not really what we said. What we stated (MY2000:409) regarding the "new era" in 1979, was

> This article first examines the changing dynamics of the relationships between the pastoral population of northeast Uganda, and successive state formations which have sought to assert authority over them. We then turn to the important transformations wrought in the texture of state-society relations, and the social dynamic within Karamoja societies, where possession of automatic weapons became widespread, beginning in 1979. The area was never subject to the degree of administrative control exercised over the rest of Uganda during high colonialism, nor in the periods of relatively effective government during most of the first period of Milton Obote's rule (1962-71). However, the sudden flow of potent firearms into the hands of civil populations when Karamoja warriors sacked the well-stocked Moroto armoury abandoned by the disintegrating army of Idi Amin opened a new era in pastoral politics in northeast Uganda, and in the nature of relationships with the central state.

In this case Knighton does not restate our thought, meaning, or attitude. Nor does he even act as a bridge between us and the reader capturing our argument by using approximately the same ensemble of words.

E

Knighton (2005:183) argues that

> There has long been a dispute over who is the true heir in the Jimos fire-maker's family. The last fire-maker to be installed was Lotum,

> who died in the early 1950s, [note number 4 is inserted here] and is buried alongside his famous father, Dengel, in the sacred grove looking north outside the *ere*. Uniquely they are not buried in the cattle corral, and have stone cairns for a memorial. There is a method of trying the candidate. In 1996, one put out sandals with oil on top, but he was proved to be a fraud by their being eaten by a hyena (J13). There were two candidates, Dengel Kamare [note number 5 is inserted here] of Losilang and Lomuleu Epuriapua. However Kamare had broken the rules: keeping fire burning and drinking pure sorghum beer is not unusual, but eating tepary beans and defecating in corral is most odd. 'A fire-maker could only eat meat from the sacrifice' (J10). A fire-maker should be old, so as not to move up and down, and should eat no alien food. He should have no wounds from wild animals or enemies (J13). He should be chosen by the remainder of the Tome generation-set in a good year according to the behaviour of the candidates, but clearly the Tome elders do not want to appoint a quasi-monarchical figure for their generation.

In note 4 Knighton implies that the information about Lotum, the last fire-maker to be installed, comes from the Gullivers. It does not; the Gullivers say nothing about Lotum and his death in the 1950s on page 40 or page 50 or anywhere between these pages. On the contrary, the Gullivers (1953:50) refer to the firemaker, saying that:

> The present hereditary fire-maker is an old man called Denel who lives in the *Ju-mos* settlement of Lothilau. It is said that he will be succeeded by his grandson who is at the moment a small boy.

Knighton (2000:183n5) writes that

> "Dengel was the name of his grandfather, the penultimate and renowned fire-maker, while Kamare means 'he of the tepary beans' (*Phaseolus acutifolis*). Where this leaves Nakapor, Mirzeler's active Losilang fire-maker, is not at all clear: 'Nakapor, the current *ekaworan* [*sic*] (political-religious leader who demonstrates his traditional power by making fire from wet branches of essegese tree)' (Mirzeler and Young 2000: 420; Mirzeler 1999: 91, 369, 374). As his fieldwork was done before these interviews, it would appear that his account is confused with Nakapor making new fire in Kaceri. Even there Nacam had already done it for his new community, though there is no installed fire-maker for the Oding section (ibid.:411).

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