

Nafasi Za Kazi Halmashauri Ya Manispaa Ya Dodoma

The idea for this book has grown out of an engagement with Mafia Island, Tanzania over the last forty-five years, during which time I have made seven research trips there, and published numerous articles and books. Some people on the island have become close friends, indeed quasi-kin, and I have been closely involved in their lives. One such person, whom I knew when he was an adolescent back in 1965, was Mikidadi Kichange, who treated me as his older sister for all the years of our friendship, until his untimely death in 2002. Apart from our meetings when I was in Tanzania, he shared through regular letters his education, training in forestry, national service, marriage and the birth of two daughters, the care of many children of relatives, his employment and his founding of an NGO for the betterment of the island. Although Mikidadi never managed to return to full-time education as he had wished, he read widely in Swahili, English and Arabic. By the time of our last meeting in the summer of 2002, when we worked together for several months on Mafia, he had become a colleague and interlocutor, as well as a 'younger brother' and friend. Since his unexpected death in the autumn of 2002 at the age of 49 I have considered how he might be remembered by the writing of a book about his life which would also

illustrate the profound changes which have taken place on Mafia Island, and in Tanzania more widely since independence. I would call this work biographical history, as well as historical biography in which the lives of ordinary people reveal their struggles, constraints, and, as in this case, an extraordinary ability to overcome their circumstances.

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