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THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN UGANDA 1844-1945

A Dissertation presented as part of  
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

By

A. B. K. KASOZI

To the


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

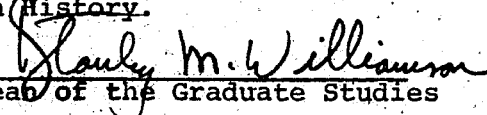
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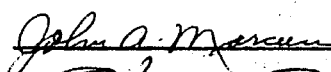
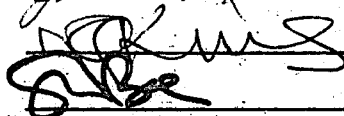

in

March 1974

The dissertation of  
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THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN UGANDA  
1844-1945

PhD Thesis presented to the University of California, Santa Cruz  
in March 1974

by

A. B. K. Kasozi

Re-examination of interpretations scholars provided for the penetration of Islam into Africa have led me to conclude that it was not the similarity of the African traditional way of life that facilitated and explains the spread of Islam in Africa. Rather, it was the weakening, disruption and sometimes complete destruction of the African way of life that created a partial "belief vacuum" which Islam and indeed other foreign beliefs filled. The penetration of foreign beliefs was further facilitated, once they had made the initial inroads, by the failure of the African beliefs either to compete effectively with the newcomers or to cope with the resultant changes. As the preachers of foreign beliefs came from or represented a superior technology, they were able to demonstrate how the African way of doing things was not only archaic but also inferior to theirs.

In Uganda, Islam was first preached in Buganda where the people's confidence in their way of life was undergoing a crisis. Traditional religions were not only weak in the sense that they were daily failing to perform what was expected of them, but they were also under constant attack by the king. The Baganda's social organization had, and was still undergo-

ing, painful changes that confused its members. Their economic system had shifted away from the clan leaders and other hereditary lords to the king and his men. And finally, the monarchy who the people had begun to regard as their "ultimate concern" was beginning to lose its former status. The coming of Islam and Christianity to Buganda coincided with this weakening of confidence in the traditional way of life. Since people in a society need a belief system to live by and justify their actions, foreign religions came at an opportune moment. They provided an alternative system that many people in Buganda easily grabbed.

The undermining of the African way of life was so effectively done by the simultaneous adoption of foreign beliefs that in 1888 the converts to the latter were able to initiate a revolution that changed the Baganda concept of power and the world. Henceforth, the king lost his position as a sacral monarch; thus ceasing to "personify" the state. His arbitrary powers were clamped down and given to an oligarchy of converts to the foreign religions. From then on foreign beliefs (Islam and Christianity) became the value system, the base or the criterion upon which people justified their actions. Traditional beliefs ceased to function as such.

Islam and Christianity thus became the religions of the state as from 1888 with Muslims and Christians sharing various positions of power. However, the victors quarrelled and fought over the spoils. The "Buganda Religious Wars" that followed lasted for over six years. The Muslims lost and were forced

to flee to the surrounding districts. This is how Islam was spread to the rest of Uganda. It was carried from Buganda to the rest of the country by Baganda Muslims who had been rejected by their own people through military defeat. But Islam did not make much progress in areas outside Buganda. Unaided by political power, Islam failed to penetrate or to break the traditional beliefs of these people which were, unlike those in Buganda, still intact and firm. Although Islam succeeded as a religion, its permanence is shaky because it failed to become a culture of its adherents. It does not permeate and determine all the actions of its adherents.

I have divided the thesis into seven chapters each dealing with a specific item. At the end I suggest that societies are most likely to change their beliefs when their own are either in a state of chaos or are no longer able to perform their functions. I also suggest that beliefs originating from a superior technological society will easily penetrate and displace those of a weak and backward society.

## PREFACE

Uganda is one of the many small unviable "new" nations of Africa that have come into the world community of nations since the 1960's. It is located between the western shores of Lake Victoria and the Mountains of the Moon (the Ruwenzoris). The River Nile (the White Nile) begins and snakes through the country before entering the Sudan. For administrative purpose, the British colonial rulers divided the country into four regions: Buganda, Western, Northern and Eastern regions. Buganda was the center of both political and economic activity. The people of Buganda are called Baganda, their language Luganda and their ways of doing things assume a Ki prefix. The Baganda, Banyoro, Batoro and Banyankole were formerly ruled by kings but the kingdoms have, since 1967, been abolished.

During the preparation of this study, I have depended for assistance and sustenance on many individuals and institutions. It is impossible to thank all of them in this short note of acknowledgement. I will however, mention a few whose assistance has been vital. My special thanks go to Professor Noel Q. King who not only showed me the existence of untaped Islamic studies in Uganda but also helped me all along the difficult path of preparing this dissertation. His help both at Makerere and at Santa Cruz has been of

vital use to me. My special thanks are extended to Professor J. B. Webster, who as head of the Department of History at Makerere, picked me out of the gutter where the East African educational system throws many of its unfortunate sons. His encouragements and letters of recommendations bolstered up my determination considerably. I would like to extend special gratitude to Mr. Said Hamdun of Nairobi who helped me sort out my field of study and read through some earlier work which is included in this study. In reading and correcting my work, Prof. M. S. Kiwanuka of Makerere History Department, helped me a great deal. At the University of California my appreciation goes to Edmund Burke III whose intellectual influence since I came to Santa Cruz has been of tremendous impact on my way of thought. During my stay at Santa Cruz, I have taken a number of courses on North Africa and the Middle East from him that have been extremely valuable in the maturing of my thought. Hard to forget are classes on how to be a good scholar that I took with Professor John Ralph Willis when he was still at the University of California, Berkeley. Finally, I give my sincere respects to Prof. George Baer and Professor Richard Olson for enduring the various headaches I must have given them while they were chairmen of the Board of History at U. C. Santa Cruz.

The finances for the research of which this thesis is a product were given by a research grant from Makerere Staff Development Committee and I should like to record my gratitude. I was also helped financially by the University



of California with a Teaching Assistantship and a Tuition Fellowship for over 2 years. I would like to thank Prof. Stanley Williamson of the Graduate Division and Professor Philip Bell in recommending me for the above financial assistance.

There are, in addition, innumerable persons whose names I have not mentioned that helped me prepare this work. These include people whom I interviewed in my research, secretaries who typed my work, etc. To them all, I am very grateful.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Ar.	Arabic
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society
D.C.	District Commissioner
E.A.L.B.	East African Literature Bureau
E.G.A.	Entebbe Government Archives
Lug.	Luganda
Lunny.	Lunyoro
Lus.	Lusoga
Lut.	Lutoro
M.I.S.R.	Makerere Institute of Social Research
Mss	Manuscripts
n.d.	no date
O.U.P.	Oxford University Press
S.M.P.	Secretarial Minute Paper
P.C.	Provincial Commissioner
Sw.	Swahili
Ug. J1.	Uganda Journal

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE. . . . .	iii
ABBREVIATIONS. . . . .	vi
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
1. Introductory Note. . . . .	1
2. A Note About the Sources . . . . .	3
3. The Nature of Uganda Islam . . . . .	11
4. The Distribution of Muslims in Uganda . . . . .	13
II. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE SPREAD OF ISLAM . . . . .	22
1. African Traditions, Customs and Way Life . . . . .	22
2. The Myth of the Imperial Helping Hand. . . . .	38
3. Christian Missions and Islam . . . . .	44
III. THE WEAKENING OF AFRICAN BELIEFS . . . . .	54
1. Changes in Religious Beliefs . . . . .	61
2. The Social Sector. . . . .	69
3. The Economic Sector. . . . .	75
4. The Political Sector . . . . .	80
IV. THE PENETRATION OF ISLAM IN BUGANDA FROM THE REIGN OF SUNA II TO 1900 . . . . .	94
1. Period of Cautious Islam 1844-1854 . . . . .	94
2. The Golden Age of Islam in Buganda 1865-1875: The Reign of Mukabya Mutesa . . . . .	98
(a) Factors favoring the Adoption of Islam. . . . .	99
(b) The Impact of Islam on Ganda Society 1862-1875 . . . . .	109
(c) Decline of Islamic Influence 1875-1844 . . . . .	120
3. Period of Religious Scramble and Unfulfilled Expectations 1884-1894 . . . . .	131

Chapter

(a)	Breakup of the Alliance . . . . .	142
(b)	The Reign of Nuhu Kalema. . . . .	146
(c)	Brutalities . . . . .	153
V.	ISLAM SPREADS TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY 1890-1921. . . . .	164
	Refugees of the Religious wars . . . . .	175
	Sudanese (Nubi) Troops . . . . .	178
	Baganda Sub-Imperialists . . . . .	180
	Ankole . . . . .	187
	Bunyoro. . . . .	194
	Toro . . . . .	198
	Kigezi . . . . .	205
	Busoga . . . . .	208
	Bukedi . . . . .	217
	Teso . . . . .	219
	Karamoja . . . . .	220
	Acholi-Lango Area. . . . .	222
	West Nile and Madi . . . . .	226
VI.	PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS CONSOLIDATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS 1900-1945. . . . .	235
VII.	CONCLUSION. . . . .	269
	APPENDIXES . . . . .	276
I.	Glossary . . . . .	276
II.	Oral Sources--The Informants . . . . .	284
III.	The Written Sources. . . . .	288

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Introductory Note

My interest in the study of the spread of Islam in Uganda was motivated by a desire to re-examine the interpretations scholars and laymen provided for the Islamization of Africa. These interpretations were to the effect that the major reason for the spread of Islam into Africa was that it was easy for the Africans because its demands were similar to those demanded by the African way of life. On Uganda Islam especially, Gee wrote that "Islam makes a tremendous appeal to the Africans. The 'freemasonry' of Islam is an attraction and its standards compare well with those of nominal Christians." I felt that such an explanation was not only simple but also derogatory. There must be a deeper cause than this. In Chapter II, we shall try to examine certain aspects of African way of life such as the naming of the newly born, burial customs, attitude of life after death, the position of specialists like medicine-men in African society, the African laws of inheritance, etc. and see whether they supported or opposed Islam. As the reader will find out African traditions, customs and way of life were very different from the lifestyles demanded by

Islam. In Chapter III, I shall try to prove or to explain that it was due to the weakening and disruption of the African way of life that made Ugandans, and probably other African peoples, adopt new foreign religions. This weakening and disruption, which obviously caused a crisis and partial vacuum in men's hearts, started long before foreign religions ever came to Uganda. It was this partial vacuum that Islam and later Christianity gradually filled. In the following chapter, we shall trace how the adoption of foreign religions not only accelerated the weakening of the old ways of life, but also how it caused a social and political revolution in Buganda. Simultaneously, I shall trace the penetration of Islam in Buganda and the immediate factors that eased her way into the hearts of the Baganda. In Chapter Five, I shall trace and discuss how Islam was carried from Buganda to the rest of Uganda by Sudanese troops, Baganda refugees of the religious wars and agents. I shall also try to show that Islam failed to gain as many converts in these areas as it did in Buganda because of the aboriginal nature of these societies at the time Islam came to them. The last chapter will review the achievements and problems of Islams in the period when the struggle for mastery and for mass converts were over.

Our study will begin in 1844 when Ahmed bin Ibrahim is supposed to have preached Islam for the first time to the Buganda monarchy, Suna II, and stop in 1945. 1945, was for the Muslims, the coming of age in Uganda. In that year,

the East African Muslim Welfare Society for the improvement of Islam was founded by the Aga Khan. Also in that year two important events that were to affect Muslims in Uganda took place. The first was the registration of the Uganda Muslim Education Association founded in 1944 by Ramadhan Gava for building and administering Muslim (secular) schools. From then on, Muslims would receive western education in their own schools. Secondly, the divided Muslims decided to seek advice from Mecca on how to solve their internal problems. Although the divisions still remain today, Muslims at least began to see the real cause of their disunity.

## 2. A Note About the Sources

In preparing this study, I have not been able, neither have I desired, to look at all available possible sources of evidence. Rather, I have been interested in the utilization of the neglected sources--the Muslim evidence--and the reexamination of the popularly used ones. Some of these are written sources but the majority were committed to memory, that is not written. I realize, as I shall point out later, that they have many shortcomings but so have most sources. Comparison with other sources, patching a piece of evidence on one side and trimming the model so created, I have found, was the best way of reconstructing the story.

Original sources used include papers in Archives especially the Government Archives at Entebbe, at District and town levels. These were very useful to me especially

for the period 1890-1920. Most of the documents are the work of early European observers, some of whom were men of very high caliber. But a large number of them reflected the bias of their time and upbringing. Also used extensively in this study as original evidence is Oral Information--testimony committed to memory by men who either participated in the events or were told by those who were eyewitness at the time. Studies concerned with oral evidence, such as J. Vansina in Oral Tradition, 1965 and D. F. MacCall in Africa in Time Perspective, 1960 have pointed out that oral sources have many shortcomings and should be used after subjection to rigorous criticism. It is not my intention to bore the reader by listing their findings, except to mention a few that I encountered during my work. There was a tendency among the people I interviewed to magnify their personal achievements and how near they were to the men of authority. Comparing them to other evidence, I found that some of them, men like Wamala, Hassan Ssebowa, etc. are not even mentioned by other sources such as Kagwa, Ham Mukasa or Abdallah Ssekimwanyi. There was an outright exaggeration. However, the stories they told marched so neatly with what other evidence yielded that I could not simply dismiss them. Occasional failure of memory, lack of a well-knit story, was also another problem. I had to be content to taking pieces of information in irregular and badly served courses. The main disadvantage of Muslim informants in Uganda is that few if any of them were at the center of action, for most of the



leading Muslim gentry were killed off in the religious wars and the rest ran away after their defeat. Such live informants as I consulted were peripheral men like Asumani Wamala who was a mere foot soldier armed with spear. He could only depend on what his bosses told him or on rumor, to perceive what was happening. However despite all these disadvantages, especially their inability to remember the dates of the events they committed to memory, they had one advantage. The actions they described, at least for most of them, happened in their lifetime and so they could furnish me with a lot of details.

A number of manuscripts have also been utilized and often cited in the text. Three manuscripts that have not so far attracted the attention of many students are M. M. Katungulu's Ebyafayo by Obuisiramu mu Buganda (History of Islam) that was obtained from the author by Arye Oded and deposited in Makerere Library. Katungulu, Musa, was one of the Muslims who fought in the battles of the 1880's in Buganda. When war was over, he settled at Kabiji, Buddu near Masaka. His material is not really original for he cites Christian writers like Kagwa and Mukasa. But he adds fresh information on the fortune of the Muslims. For example, he is the only source that records Kalema's Muslim name, Nuhu. Then there are Swaibu Ssemakula's and Ahmad Nsambu's autobiographies which were obtained from their authors by Prof. Noel King and deposited in the Department of Religious Studies at Makerere. Swaibu Ssemakula was young when the

wars of religion took place but his father was a page in the palace and worked in one of the many Bitongoles (administrative divisions). However, Swaibu's MSS begins in the C20th--the time he began to fully participate in public affairs. Ahmad Nsambu was a young man in the last decade of the nineteenth century and is a mine of information. He seems to have an answer to every question asked of him. His MSS deals with the period 1900-1965 and concentrates on the origins and development of the conflicts within the Muslim community. Ameril Nantagya's Takulaba, 1904, is worth looking at but unfortunately the author seems to have depended on Kagwa too much. A microfilm copy of the MSS can be obtained in Makerere Library. Other manuscripts used are those written by Christian authors such as Miti's Ebyafayo bya Buganda, Gomotoka's Makula, Hamu Mukasa Simudda Nyuma III and many others.

The first category of published sources that I was interested and used in the text is that recorded by eyewitnesses--of men who wrote either at the time we are dealing with or later on. These include local Christian writers, foreign writers and Muslim writers. Local Christians of Uganda living in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries left behind an enormous amount of literature for which dissertation topic seekers--among a number of other things of course--should be thankful. They were able to do so after attending Christian missionaries' schools.

Missionary centers were so involved with literacy that in

Luganda the word "reader" is synonymous to a convert. I have used their chronicles extensively. This was especially so with Kagwa. His Ekitabo Kya Basekabaka be Buganda, 1953 ed; Ekitabo Kye Mpisa za Baganda, 1952 reprint, Ebika bya Baganda, 1949, and to some extent Ekitabo Kye Kika Kye Nsenene besides other works have been very useful. Kagwa who began writing in 1890's is the author of numerous works. Being a Prime Minister of his country for over thirty years, Kagwa was in a position to tap official and unofficial information from all sources of the country. He was one of the pages in Mutesa's court, was converted to Christianity (after reading some Islam) and emerged as the most outstanding leader of the Christian party in and after the religious wars. After the establishment of British rule and the deposition of Mwanga, he became, as regent during the minority of Kabaka Daudi Chwa, the undisputed ruler of Buganda. Likewise Ham Mukasa whose writings I have used extensively was a page in the palace, got converted to Christianity and later became an important chief. His Simudda Nyumaa, a voluminous three volume work has more delicate and humorous touch than Kagwa's works. Because these Christian writers were men at the center of the stage and helped influence the course of events, their works are very valuable. Unlike foreign writers, they knew the ways and traditions of the people they were writing about. But they have certain shortcomings. First of all, Kagwa and many of these writers were competitors in a political and economic struggle that raged at the time.

There is a tendency either to smear the antagonist with dirt or to minimize his work. Thus they all blame the Muslims for the evils that befell the country in the nineteenth century. Apolo Kagwa does not give credit to the heroic deeds of Semei Kakungulu. Further, these accounts suffer from the fact that they were composed after the deciding events had taken place. For that reason the events described were "retrospectively reconstructed" to absorb the resultant balance of power in Uganda.

John Rowe's, "Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition: Luganda historical writings 1893-1969" in Uganda Journal, 33 (1969) has probably what one may refer to as the fullest discussion of local written sources. Foreign writers who included explorers, missionaries, company and government officials are another category of eyewitness sources. They are useful because they saw what was happening and wrote about it. Some of them especially missionaries like E. C. Gordon, Mackay, Ashe, Lourdel, etc. indirectly (through their converts) participated and therefore shaped the history of Uganda. But unlike the local writers, they did not have as good a grasp of the society they were writing about as they should. A few of them later, like J. Roscoe did, but the majority did not. Like their local Christian converts, they put all the blame to the Muslims and their "Arab friends" instead of taking a judicious point of view. The student of history, can however, read through this weakness and extract the valuable evidence that is in their

work. Their periodicals like Annals de La Propagation de la foi (White Fathers), the Gleaner (CMS), the Intelligencer (CMS), Ebifa (CMS), Mengo Notes (CMS), Munno (White Father) contain very valuable information.

The last category of eyewitness writers that are used in the text are the few Muslim writers. Their points of view have been neglected so much that I felt I should bring them to light. Their advantage lies in the fact that they are a counter to the enormous charges the Christian chronicles heap on Muslims. Their books are not worthy the name and can only be referred to as pamphlets. But they are compact pamphlets giving a very firm skeleton upon which flesh can be easily patched. Some of these sources are:

Abdallah Sekimwanyi's Ebimu Ku Byafayo By'omu Buganda Ebitonotono (n.d.) and his other pamphlet Ebyafayo Ebitonotono Ku ddini Ye Kiyisiramu Okuyingira mu Buganda Kampala, 1947.

He was one of the earliest converts to Islam, fought in the religious wars and after the war, settled down to study. He was the first Muganda to go and come back safely to Mecca. Then there is Bakale Mukasa bin Mayanja's history of the wars with the impressive title of Akatabo K'Ebyafayo Ebyantalo za Kabaka Mwanga, Kiwewa ne Kalema, 1937, Kampala. Like Ssekimwanyi, he was one of the early converts who fought in the religious wars. He describes the battles and the sufferings they endured very vividly. He gives a Muslim version of the wars, the mistakes they made and the betrayals meted out to them. And finally there is Sheik Abdul Karimu Nyanzi's

Ebyafayo Bye Ntalo ze Ddini mu Buganda (n.d.). Nyanzi was the son of one of the Muslim warriors. He received what he published, if his story is true, from the mouth of his father. In this pamphlet, he sets out to correct the accusations Christian writers have brought against the Muslims. These sources give the Muslim point of view that has been so far neglected by scholars. However, they all suffer the disadvantage of being written as a reaction to the charges of Christian writers. For this reason, many of these Muslim chronicles are either counter-offensive or are very apologetic. Their second disadvantage is that none of the Muslim writers was a man of social or political importance at the period we are dealing with. Most of the important Muslim leaders like Tebukozza, Kapalaga, Bukulu, Lubanga and many others were killed off early in the upheaval of the nineteenth century. As a result, the Muslim story is told by men of low ranks who had no power of deciding which way events should move. Nuhu Mbogo, who later became the leader of Muslims was a prince of the drum; that is he was one of the members of the royal house still eligible for the Kabakaship. Because of this he was excluded from participating in the struggle for chiefly power for princes of the drum by Kiganda law could not become chiefs--this was reserved for "commoners." As a result, he could not be as a master of Buganda political intrigue as was Kagwa. However, after 1896, he became a dominant personality in Buganda. Unfortunately, he did not write his experiences down.

Secondary sources are many as the reader will notice. Two types of sources can be distinguished. First there are those sources written by serious academicians who did thorough research of the area and people they wrote about. Among these are A. D. Low, John Rowe, M. M. Kiwanuka, Noel Q. King, J. S. Trimmingham, Michael Twaddle, C. C. Wrigley, F. B. Welbourn, A. I. Richards, Apter, Roland Oliver, Sir John Gray, L. F. Falleb, J. P. Crazzolara and a number of others have been very useful to me. Then there are those of what we might call flying academicians with a huge research grant, a paid residence of three weeks in the Hilton Hotel after which the writer goes back home--usually in some western university and comes out with a theoretical model about African society. I have used some of their works and wish them well. One might also find good information from travel logs of explorers like Speke, Burton, Stanley, Baker, Emin Pasha, etc. Many of these were, of course, written in a Victorian style for a Victorian audience and the researcher should be on guard as to which information he takes.

### 3. The Nature of Uganda Islam

Uganda Islam is still in its infancy in the sense that it has not yet been truly and entirely integrated into the social structure of those who believe in it. It does not influence every aspect of the lives of those who practice it such as is the case in the Maghrib, the Western Sudan, Egypt or the East African coast. It is not the determining factor

of every action of those people who practice it in Uganda. Moreover, Uganda Islam receives very little, if any, influence from the Muslim world. No clerics and men of letters of respectable positions are ever sent to Uganda. True, some sheriffs from the East African coast and one or two from Mecca may drop in for a week or two but there is nothing like the communication such as there is between the Maghrib and the Middle East or the Western Sudan and the Hijaz. There has not been any Islamic theocracy such as was the case in the Western Sudan which used political power to integrate Islam into the social fabric. Unlike West Africa, the influences of orders in the interior of East Africa has been very minimal. True, some orders like the Qadiriyya Brotherhood have had some influence in East Africa but it is nothing like the orders had in the Western Sudan.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Uganda Islam penetrated, except for a few years in Central Buganda and Bugweri principality of Busoga, by individual conversion. There was no wholesale conversions of whole tribes or groups of people such as was the case in West Africa, the Nilotic Sudan or the Maghrib. It is also important to note that Islam in Uganda is just over a hundred years old whereas on the East African coast, the Magharib or the Sudan, it is more than a thousand years old.

Another important point to note as we read through this work is that Islam in Uganda is a religion of the minority. The 1959 Uganda Census Report gave Muslims as comprising about 5.6% of the population. Muslim sceptics doubt the authenticity



of these figures because, so they claim, in those days few people would have confessed publically to Census officers that they were Muslims. Islam was a religion of the down-trodden, a third class set of citizens who had few opportunities. As a result, so they add, many people practiced Islam in the dark and denounced it during the day. I feel their claims are exaggerated but there is some truth in what they say. In 1969, another census was taken but unfortunately, it was not broken down into publishable figures that would indicate religions or tribal affiliations. It was unfortunate but politically understandable.

#### 4. Distribution of Muslims in Uganda

Muslims are not only a minority in the country but also they do not live in one monolithic area that would give them a sense of an Islamic political community, an umma. Instead, they are spread out and for that matter mixed with others, all over the country. Their distribution, however, is very uneven. There are some areas like Butambala where mosques dominate the landscape and others where the voice of the muezzin is never heard.

About 41.7% of Uganda's Muslims lived in 1959, in Buganda Region (then consisting of Masaka, Mubende, East and West Mengo districts as Map I shows).<sup>2</sup> There were therefore more than 85,000 Muslims in Buganda. Buganda dominated the Muslim hierarchy in the country and their way of thought influenced the actions of other Muslims in the whole country.

The Baganda were the first Africans in Uganda to adopt Islam. This is partly due to the position which Buganda held at the time Islam penetrated to this area of East Africa in the mid-nineteenth century. When Arab and Swahili traders came to look for ivory, Buganda had the means not only to give them what they sought but also to curb their activities if she felt the traders were prejudicial to her interests. The traders prudently based their trade, religions, and political activities in Buganda. It was here that they first taught their religion to the indigenous peoples of the country. When Mutesa I, Kabaka of Buganda joined Islam, many of his subjects became Muslims, mainly on the principle of "I follow my leader" though a few were sincere.

The Eastern Region with 38.2% of Uganda's Muslims has the next largest number. Islam was carried to this region by Baganda agents or "sub-imperialists" who administered this area in the years 1899-1920 either for or in collaboration with British imperial administrators. Later, they were joined and strengthened by Swahili and Asian traders. They are however, concentrated in certain specific areas such as Busoga and Bukedi. The Northern Region contained 14.7% of Uganda's Muslims who were mainly descendants of Sudanese (or Nubian) troops who were recruited by the pioneer British officials to serve the young colony. Unlike the Muslims in other areas of Uganda, people in the Northern Region have been subjected to the influence of the Malik Madhab. However, this influence is on the way out.

The Western Region with only 5.4% of Uganda's Muslims has the fewest Muslims. This is due to the fact that no significant group of Muslim peoples moved into this area for trade or otherwise such as Arabs and Swahilis in Buganda or Khartoum Region.

On a district basis, Madi in the North-West has the biggest number of Muslims. About 36.4% of the people of that district were, in 1959, Muslims. Many of these were either descendants or mixed with former Sudanese soldiers. Busoga with 13% of its population Muslim is followed by West Nile with 9.3% as having the largest number of Muslims. Figures of other Districts are given in the Table II and Map I. The Census report gave Karamoja as having 0.0% Muslim. This is not surprising since 98.1% of its population was given as "others" which meant that on the whole the Karamajong had not yet adopted foreign religions. Of late however, the Christian missionaries, especially the Catholic ones, have been very active in the District. Kigezi District in Southwest Uganda had only 0.4% of its population Muslim. The scarcity of Muslims in these two areas is largely due to the isolated position of these Districts vis-a-vis the Arab and Swahili traders' routes and centers of activity.

Tables I and II show the distribution of Muslims on (a) Regional basis and (b) District basis. Figures are given in thousands.

TABLE 1

TABLE SHOWING PEOPLE OF 16 AND OVER BY RELIGION AND  
REGIONS; SHOWING ISLAM IN RELATION TO OTHER  
FAITHS IN UGANDA AS A WHOLE.

(Figure in thousands)

	ROMAN CATHOLIC		PROTESTANT		MUSLIM		OTHER	
	1,000	%	1,000	%	1,000	%	1,000	%
UGANDA	1,264	34.5	1,033	28.2	204	5.6	1,160	31.8
BUGANDA	569	49.0	319	27.5	85	7.3	186	16.2
EASTERN	275	24.0	298	26.8	78	7.0	461	41.4
NORTHERN	200	31.7	182	28.8	30	4.7	220	34.8
WESTERN	220	28.8	234	30.8	11	1.4	297	39.0

Uganda's Total: 6,449,558: 1959 Census.

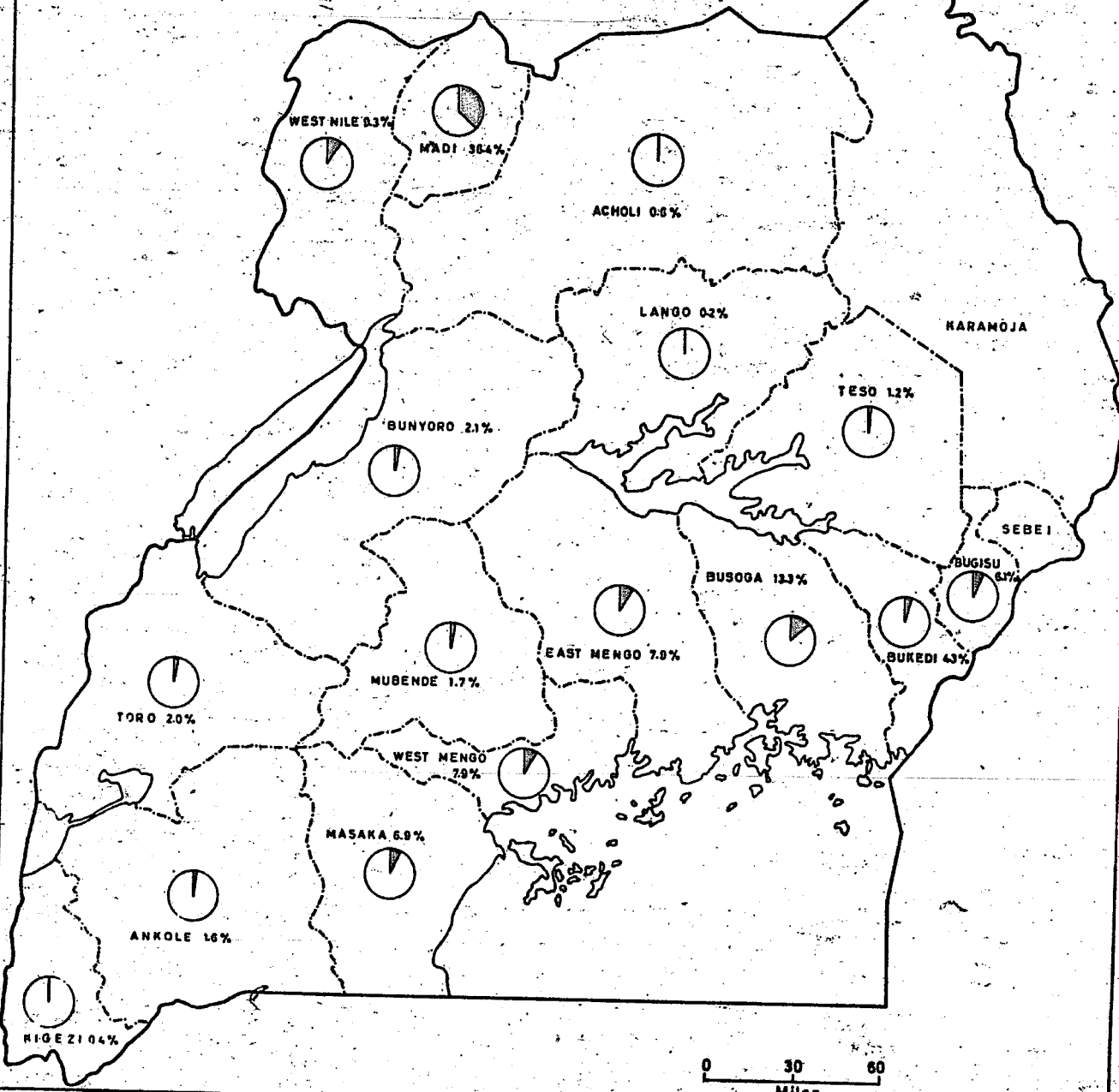
NB 1959 Census is used because the 1969 Census which gave Uganda's population as over 10 million did not break down the figures in very much detail.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF MUSLIMS IN UGANDA OF PEOPLE OF  
16 AND OVER (1959 CENSUS). BY  
REGIONS AND DISTRICTS

AREA	TOTAL	%
UGANDA	204,000	5.6
BUGANDA	85,000	7.3
W. MENGO	35,000	7.9
E. MENGO	31,000	7.9
MUBENDE	1,000	1.7
MASAKA	19,000	6.9
EASTERN	78,000	7.0
BUSOGA	53,000	13.0
BUKEDI	10,000	4.3
BUGISU	12,000	6.1
TESO	4,000	1.2
NORTHERN	30,000	4.7
KARAMOJA	—	0.0
ACHOLI	1,000	0.6
MADI	10,000	36.4
LANGO	—	0.2
W. NILE	19,000	9.3
WESTERN	11,000	1.4
TORO	4,000	2.0
KIGEZI	1,000	0.4
ANKOLE	4,000	1.6
BUNYORO	2,000	2.1

### MUSLIM POPULATION IN UGANDA, 1959 CENSUS



The totals and percentages do not reflect well the locations of Muslims in the country. Muslims are not, except in some counties of Buganda, evenly distributed in the country but live in small pockets and concentrations by themselves. Many of Uganda's Muslims live in urban area. In the city of Kampala, there were no less than forty mosques when I conducted a survey there in 1973. In Arua, a very small town in the West Nile District, there were four big mosques two of which were used for the Friday prayer. Many Islamic religious activities take place mainly in urban areas. Quran schools such as Bwaise on the outskirts of Kampala and "Madarasat-wa Hadat fil Islam" in Arua are located in towns. It was after all in towns that Muslim traders who brought Islam settled and continued to carry on their activities. The Muslim population gets thinner and thinner the further one moves away from towns to rural areas.

There are, however, pockets of Muslims concentrated in certain rural areas due to some historical causes. In Baganda, the county of Butambala was allocated, by Lugard of the British Imperial East African Company which was then administering Buganda, to the Muslims in 1892. Aringa County in West Nile has a population which is over 80% Muslim. Many of the descendants of former Sudanese troops live there. Bugwere County in Busoga has a thick concentration of Muslims. Islam spread in this area rapidly when its ruler, the Mehna by the name of Munulo became a Muslim

in 1896 and embarked on an Islamizing campaign in his principality. In Ankole, Muslims are found mainly in Bukanga and Shema where early Muslim Baganda refugees settled.

There are other small pockets of Muslims where army camps had been established or where some Muslim men of influence settled. Thus there are thick concentrations of Muslims at Bombo and Entebbe which were once British military camps. In the Kidde and Kabiji areas of Masaka former influential Muslim warriors of the religious wars (Bajungute) settled and many of their supporters followed them here.

To some extent, therefore Muslims live by themselves in small pockets sandwiched and dispersed amongst Christian majorities.



CHAPTER I: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Martin, B. G. "Muslim Politics and Resistance to Colonial Rule: Sheik Uways B Muhammad al-Bārawī and the Qadiriyya Brotherhood in East Africa" in Journal of African History X, 1969 pp. 471-486.

<sup>2</sup>Uganda Census Report, 1959, Entebbe Government Archives.

## CHAPTER II

### MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

Many writers on Islam in Africa are of the view that the road of Islam into Africa was an extremely easy one and that there were no major obstacles to bar its penetration into this continent. A number of factors that are claimed to have facilitated the quick spread of Islam are often given.<sup>1</sup> I do not intend to discuss all of them here. But from my own work in Uganda, I have found that their claims are not true. I have therefore decided, that before I go on to show how Islam spread in Uganda, I should clear these misconceptions perpetuated by various writers on African Islam. These claims are that Islam easily spread because its demands were similar to those of the African traditional way of life, that European imperialism deliberately helped Islam and that Christian missionaries sympathised with and helped Islam.

#### 1. African Traditions, Customs and Way of Life

The major misconception or, for that matter, myth that has been popularly held about the spread of Islam in Africa is the similarity of African traditions, customs and way of life with the demands of Islam that is supposed to

have made Islam extremely at home in Africa. That belief may or may not be true in the rest of Africa but in Uganda it was certainly not the case. In the form that Islam was brought to Uganda mainly by Arab traders from the East African coast, African traditions, customs and way of life have in fact, where they were still strong to put up an opposition, acted as a barrier against the spread of Islam in Uganda. To show what I mean, I will use a few examples of certain aspects of African societies that were opposed to Islam mainly from Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Toro and Busoga.

In Bunyoro, Buganda, Ankole and Busoga, the naming of the newly-born was, and still is, of particular significance. The ceremony was usually presided over by the head of the clan or the head of household.<sup>2</sup> In Buganda, such a person was usually the grandfather who normally selected the name of one of the ancestors of the child who might be thought to have been re-incarnated in the newly-born. Naming after a particular ancestor was thus to establish an ancestor whose ghost would be the child's guardian. No name of a living person would be given to the child and "there was no such thing as family names."<sup>3</sup> But when Islam was introduced in Uganda, the whole naming system was changed. The religious man, mu'allim, who need not be related by blood to the child took over the ceremonies. He selected and gave the name of the newly-born child. Such a name was, and still is, of Arabic origin such as Ahmad, Abdallah or Hassan. Thus for the Africans who adopted Islam, a complete

rejection of not only their way of naming was demanded, but also of their traditional names. Abdallah Ssekimwanyi, pioneer Uganda pilgrim to Mecca, Muslim writer and historian was formerly called Mukasa. After he had been converted to Islam, however, he changed his name to Abdalla Ssekimwanyi because Mukasa was the name of Lubaale Mukasa, the Ganda God of the lake.<sup>4</sup>

The Arabs and Swahilis who introduced Islam in Uganda told the people that circumcision was obligatory to all Muslims. Although circumcision is not strictly obligatory and is not mentioned in the Quran, the Islam that was brought here and the way it was practiced here, demanded that for one to become a Muslim, one had to get circumcised.<sup>5</sup> Such a ruling contradicted the traditions and beliefs of the people of Uganda and very many who would have become Muslims refrained from doing so. In Buganda, it was considered a calamity if royal blood was shed. For this reason, princes were normally burnt to death if they received capital punishments lest they should shed their blood. Mutesa I thought the rite was impossible for him to undergo and complained to Stanley that "all Arabs" were in agreement about circumcision.<sup>6</sup> When his circumcised pages refused to eat meat slaughtered by his uncircumcised butcher, and called the king a pagan, he ordered their execution. About 200 Muslim youths were slaughtered at Namugongo in the period of 1875 to 1876.<sup>7</sup> In Bunyoro, a king who was injured and shed blood ceased to rule immediately.<sup>8</sup> Ordinary people were also

extremely afraid of circumcision. The Baganda for example had

a horror of mutilation of any kind. It would be carried through the grave to the spirit world.<sup>9</sup>

Two writers on Religion and Geography of Buganda have concluded that Islam in that kingdom

would have attracted many followers but the would be converts dreaded the mutilation it involved and they looked at it as abnormal and contrary to Kiganda customs.<sup>10</sup>

An expert on Buganda History has concluded that

One of the greatest obstacles to the spread of Islam apart from the fact that it was a new religion was the traditional distaste of mutilation and circumcision among the Baganda.<sup>11</sup>

When Nyonyintoro was made the head of the Ekitongole

Ekisalosalalo, people complained of being led by one they re-

garded as a castrated man. All the chiefs and prominent

men at Mutesa's court in Buganda were opposed to circumcision.<sup>12</sup>

The Banyankole rejected Islam because of circumcision.

Bamunoba pointed out that they regarded the rite as shameful and any person who had undergone circumcision was never given a girl for marriage.<sup>13</sup>

In Bunyoro, Dunbar pointed out that the people

by tradition did not mutilate the body and so the idea of circumcision was repugnant to them.<sup>14</sup>

African traditions therefore, almost everywhere in Uganda, were opposed to this rite. The only group of people who, by custom, circumcise are the Bagishu. But these are very few people and surprisingly very few of them are Muslims. Any African, therefore, who got circumcised had to revolt against

his own traditions.

The African burial ceremonies were, and still are, very different from those prescribed by Islam. The Baganda kept the bodies of important people for days and sometimes for months before they were buried.<sup>15</sup> The Bunyoro kept it for at least three days.<sup>16</sup> But the Muslims preached, and still preach that it must be buried on the day a person dies.<sup>17</sup> Many of the tribes of Uganda buried their dead in an open grave and put the dead in bark cloth. They also put some of the worldly possessions of the dead possibly for his use in the world of spirits. Mutesa I was buried with many of his worldly materials at Nabulagala, though this might have upset him had he been alive.<sup>18</sup> In Bunyoro, Buganda, and some other areas the death of the king was normally followed by the execution of victims to accompany royalty in the next world. In Buganda, the Kabaka's jawbone was buried separately from the body. It was believed that the spirit of the king lived with or by the jawbone. A temple was built to honor the jawbone and people paid respects to it.

Islamic burial and mourning of the dead as it was introduced in Uganda, was and still is, very different from that practiced by Africans. In Uganda, and indeed in many parts of East Africa, it consists of the following three stages.<sup>19</sup>

1. On the day a person dies, the body is washed by a recognized learned person of the same sex as the dead. It is wrapped in three white sheets

and carried on a jeneza (bier) to the courtyard where prayers are offered. Then it is taken to the grave amidst prayers led by the local mu'allim. In the grave, the body is put in a niche-recess. A board is laid against it to prevent earth falling on the body. As the people outside the grave are barred from seeing what goes on inside it by a curtain held on the top of the grave for that purpose, and also cannot see where the body has gone later, many non-Muslims Baganda tease their fellows that the latter eat their dead in the grave.

2. Matanga (sw. mats) is a three day period after the burial when the larger family, relatives and friends stay in the house of the deceased or where he used to live to keep company of those that were close to him. A communal prayer with a rice feast locally termed Maulid ends the period.<sup>20</sup>
3. 'Forty-days' period which ends the mourning ceremonies. Prayers close up the ceremony.

It can be seen therefore that Islamic burial and mourning ceremonies are very different from those of the African peoples of Uganda. Any African who adopted Islam had to undergo a renunciation of his tradition system. He had to revolt against the way his ancestors were buried and turn to a new way. As early as the days of Kabaka Mutesa I,

the Islam burial system had already had an impact on the traditional one. Influence of Islam on Mutesa made him abolish the custom of burying the jawbone and the body separately.<sup>21</sup> He told his chiefs that after his death, they should bury him in the modern (i.e. Islamic) way. He commanded that the jawbones of his ancestors should be reunited with their bodies.<sup>22</sup> He prohibited people from idealizing his spirit after his death and strictly encouraged them to look for answers in the Quran.

The attitude to the hereafter and the destiny of the soul of the people of Uganda is very different from that of the Muslims' point of view. The majority of the people of Uganda believed that when a person died, his spirit went to the spirits' world, the world of the living dead. It dwelt near the houses and homes of its physically living relatives whom it protected and who in turn paid respect to it. The relatives continued to pay their respect to the spirit of the dead till all those persons who remembered it in its human form died. As soon as this occurred, then the spirit and indeed that person disappeared into obscurity.<sup>23</sup> But the preachings of the Muslims in Uganda were and still are, eschatological.<sup>24</sup> There would be a final day of judgment and resurrection. The dead would rise and would stand judgment on the final day for the things they did in their life on earth. The Ugandan Africans who were accustomed to tending the graveyards of their dead in order to please the spirits living in the spirit world found that Islam had



changed their traditional relationship with the dead.

Islam also opposed Uganda African religions and beliefs. True, the people of Uganda knew and had an idea of a Supreme Being. The Baganda knew on Katonda.<sup>25</sup> The Banyoro called this mighty power Ruhanga and so did the Banyankole.<sup>26</sup> But the Muslim God was not only uncompromisingly monotheistic, unlike the Ganda Katonda or Banyoro Ruhanga, but also different in the way he was worshipped. The Ganda Katonda or creator "may be, however mythical, of human origin."<sup>27</sup> He was not the jealous all powerful creator that Allah (God) is and he had only three temples, all in Kyagwe, so small that only one person could fit in, if he wanted to get in.

Besides the creator (Katonda or Ruhanga), the Baganda, Banyoro and Banyankole believed in associates of God or deities that controlled the natural phenomena. In Buganda they were called (Ba) Lubaale and Kagwa gives a number of them.<sup>28</sup> In Bunyoro and Toro they are called Bachwezi.<sup>29</sup> Most of these were once human beings who have been defied. But all the Sheikhs in Uganda are agreed that Islam opposes these attributes of God. They have, therefore, rejected them and thus opposing African beliefs in preference for Islam.

Many of the African peoples of Uganda used intermediaries to speak to their gods. Many of them believed that man cannot speak to gods directly except through intermediaries.<sup>30</sup> These intermediaries or mediums linked human

beings with gods, spirits, the living dead or other powers higher than men. In Bunyoro, they were often referred to as Bachwezi while in Buganda they were called Mandwa. But Islam contradicted this belief by emphasizing that God was accessible to everyone. Everybody could speak and pray directly to God, for there are no priests in Islam. Any Muslim who knows, except for the Ismailis, can lead prayers. Islam therefore brought man nearer to God than the African religions ever did.

The Africans in Uganda recognized the presence of beings that had more power than human beings; just as "in the physical the lions do."<sup>31</sup> There were three types of these powers which the Batoro, Banyoro, Baganda and Basoga recognized. There were spirits with no human connections and spirits of national heroes. These were highly respected and worshipped in various ways. True Islam recognized spirits--jinns and others. But the relationship of a Muslim to a spirit is not the same as his pagan counterpart. A Muganda used to venerate and sometimes worship these spirits. A Muslim on the other hand never worshipped these spirits in isolation from God. He looked at them as creatures of God. They were under the control of God and their presence was an example of the power of God to create and control nature.

The African Ugandans had within their society specialists who knew how to manipulate the powers of nature to the advantage and sometimes to the disadvantage of society. Such specialists were, mediums who acted between spirits and

men; rainmakers who brought or stopped rain, sorcerers who manipulated objects to foretell the future or to interpret the past, medicine men who helped society by curing those who were ill and many others.<sup>32</sup> At first Islam allowed and introduced its own type of specialists and rejected most of the African types. As time went on, however, Muslims rejected all specialists including those who practiced "Islamic magic." Sheikh Swaibu Ssemakula, the former Sheikh Mufti of Uganda led the campaign against these specialists as early as the late 1920's. In Uganda now, any Muslim who practices the arts of these specialists is rejected by all other Muslims as if he were a leper.

Islam also reacted strongly against the social customs and pleasures of the people. For example, the Baganda had a type of greeting that amazed foreigners. A typical Muganda normally took 5-10 minutes when greeting and did not finish until he had inquired in all the affairs of life of the person he was greeting. This traditional type of greeting is given fully by Kagwa.<sup>33</sup> But when the Arabs came, they persuaded Mutesa I to change this to the Arab way of greeting of "Salaam alai-kum" or peace be upon you.<sup>34</sup> Mutesa I ordered all his subjects to greet him in the Arab way. Anybody who could not do so was liable to punishment. At present wherever a Muslim finds another Muslim, he greets him with "Aslaam alai-kum." In fact many Baganda call Muslims "Salamaleko."<sup>35</sup>

Most of the African peoples of Uganda were, and still

are, very sensitive to the rhythm of the drum beat. In Buganda the drum was put to a multiple of uses and it announced both joy and sorrow.<sup>36</sup> In Bunyoro, there were many royal and ordinary drums. On most social occasions, drums were used to provide music for entertainment. They were also used in religious ceremonies. In areas that had hereditary rulers, drums signified power or sometimes, the ruler. In Ankole the drum Bagyendanwa was "the cult of kingship." It was in fact considered to be more important than the Omugabe, for the "Omugabe dies but Bagyendanwa is always with us" and people could appeal to this drum for justice or help.<sup>37</sup> In Buganda the royal drum was called Mujaguzo and could only be sounded when a new king was being enthroned. In Bugweri, a county in Busoga whose hereditary ruler was called Menya had, royal drums known as Twambuse, Mitango and Wegule. They could only be sounded at the accession of a new Menya. In Karagwe, the royal drums were Nyabatana.<sup>38</sup> The drum therefore occupied a very important place in the religions, political and social life of the people of Uganda. But the Arab Muslims who came to Uganda prohibited the use of drums by Muslims. These Arabs and the early Muslims leaders thought that the playing of the drums was so much associated with paganism that they decided to ban their use for both religions and social functions. This was a great obstacle to the spread of Islam for the Ugandans enjoyed the drum beat very much. Swaibu Ssemakula relaised the problem very quickly. In 1928 he and others

who had found the Jamat el-Islam society allowed the use of duffs or Tambourines which in Uganda are called "Matali."<sup>39</sup> These drums, though some might be locally made, are Arabic in origin. Muslim in Uganda now play them on religious and social occasions. People like them so much that they have been responsible for the spread and sustenance of Islam in some areas of Uganda especially Busoga.<sup>40</sup> But their rhythm does not strike as deeply into men's hearts like the traditional Ngoma's. In this way Islam was barred for many people loved drums. Islam therefore opposed rather than supported African enjoyment of the rhythm of the drum beat, the religions and political beliefs connected with these drums.

Drinking is one of the aspects of social life that the African of Uganda enjoyed most. Beer was used on both religious and social functions. But the Islam that was introduced in Uganda prohibited people from drinking.<sup>41</sup> In Ankole where "the Banyankole love beer as an essential part of their social life," Islam did not make any success.<sup>42</sup> In Butambala, Buganda where there are a number of Muslims "there are comparatively few bars and drunkenness is rare."<sup>43</sup>

In Buganda, Islam opposed the traditional method of slaughter or killing of the beast for meat. The traditional way was to hit the head of the beast with an axe till it died.<sup>44</sup> This might have been due to the Baganda belief that the soul of a person and other living beasts resided somewhere in the head--most probably in the jawbone. But when

the Arabs introduced Islam, they opposed this as being anti-Islamic. They taught the Baganda to slaughter animals according to Islamic law.<sup>45</sup> They pointed out that only the circumcised could slaughter meat fit to be eaten by Muslims. To the Baganda of the time, the new religion was an attack on their traditional way of slaughtering animals. At present in Uganda, the slaughter of animals is the privilege of Muslims.

The people here had their own traditional sports like hunting, wrestling etc. Hunting was not only major sport but also gave people a source of animal proteins. The Baganda used to hunt very much and used hunting dogs.<sup>46</sup> The Kabaka of Buganda used to hunting not only for sport but also as part of his enthroning ceremony.<sup>47</sup> The Banyoro also hunted wild animals both for enjoyment and for game. In Ankole the Mugabe "had a large number of dogs for hunting and these were kept for him by his peasants."<sup>48</sup> Mutesa I was forced by the Arabs to give up his dogs, though Speke reported the Kabaka loved them.<sup>49</sup> Ssabaganzi Lubuga, the Kabaka's uncle came in possession of the Kabaka's dogs. The ban on the dogs by Islam is a manifestation of how this religion attacked one of the traditional sports here.

In most of the tribes of Uganda, a woman could not inherit and we do not hear of women Kabakas, Mukamas or Mugabes. But under Islamic law, however, a "woman can inherit."<sup>50</sup>

In many areas in Uganda, land was traditionally owned

by the group as a whole. The headman or clan leader was only a guardian of the land.<sup>51</sup> But under Islamic law, individuals could own land. In the past in Buganda, any old member of the clan could not only inherit the property of the dead, but also, if circumstances were favorable, had preference over the children of the dead. Under the influence of Islam, Mutesa I decreed that in future only children of the dead could inherit and take his goods.

Generally speaking, the people of Uganda found the demands of Islam hard. We are told that the Buganda first observed the rites of Islam because Mutesa I had made it a state religion and they feared persecutions.<sup>52</sup> The chiefs at court remained Muslims to please the king and to keep their jobs. Mutesa must have realized that people were not very sincere Muslims. He therefore chose various officers to see that Islam was well practiced. But even these officers found Islam so hard that they broke the rules they were supposed to enforce. Kakoloboto who was responsible for seeing that Ramadhan was well kept broke the fast and ate.<sup>53</sup> Just as the word "Boycott" was grafted into the English language after the Irish Captain so was "Kakoloboto" grafted into Uganda. Whoever eats in Ramadhan is called Kakoloboto by the Baganda Muslims. Kavulu tells us that the common people during the religious wars on the whole did not support the Muslim regime under Kalema.<sup>54</sup> At the Battle of Matale in Buddu "the Muslims did not have the sympathy of the populace." At Dumu in Buddu "the populace

were joining Mwanga's party in large numbers" as compared to those who joined the Muslim party under Kalema. Even Kalema himself is reported to have tried to "liberate himself from the Muslims" in Kyagwe.

Although Islam is not the determining factor of every action of those Ugandans who believe in it, it has, to some extent, separated its adherents from the rest of the African people. A Uganda Muslim tends to assume an Arabic outlook in dress and tastes. Samula Kimuli associated this to

. . . improper understanding of the difference between Islam and Arabic culture<sup>55</sup>

Sserugo thought that

the Arab influence is sometimes so strong in our homes that the non-Muslims are compelled to look at us as black copies of Arabs.<sup>56</sup>

Even small children everywhere can distinguish a Muslim from the rest of the people. They are often heard saying, "I met two people and a Muslim."<sup>57</sup> Moreover all prayers and other Islamic activities are conducted in Arabic.

I am of the opinion therefore, that the Islam that was introduced here and the way it was taught asked for different requirements from the African peoples than their traditional society demanded. Because these demands were hard, Islam did not move as fast as it might have done. African traditions, customs and way of life were thus very tough barriers to the spread of Islam. The road of Islam into this part of Africa was therefore not an easy one.

Most of the writers who cling to the opposite view



base their conclusions on marriage, polygamy and divorce. Granted, African customs regarding the above social institution of man and wife were similar to those of Islam. Like the teachings of Islam, Africans believed that any fit person had to marry. The Banyoro and Baganda disapproved, like a Hadith of the prophet, the notion of celibacy. Many people in Uganda practiced polygamy to a large extent. Mutesa I and Suna before him were husbands of over fifty wives each.<sup>58</sup> Islam restricted the number of wives to four provided the husband treated them equally both in material and psychological sense. In this case African way of life was probably similar to the demands of Islam and might have helped the penetration of the latter. But marriage alone does not make up the sum total of African traditions, customs and way of life. It was, and still is, a small part of the life circle of the traditional man. Thus to say that African traditions, customs and way of life in Uganda supported the spread of Islam because of their similarity is a misconception. It was, I believe, framed up by people who wanted an easy and, sometimes a derogatory, explanation of a much more complex problem--the problem of why Africans became Muslims. As some of the examples already cited show, and as I shall try to show in the next two chapters, Islam demanded far more than the existing African traditional set up. It demanded its converts, in many instances, not to compromise but to revolt against their own way of life.

## 2. The Myth of the Imperial Helping Hand

The second popular misconception about the History of Islam in Africa is that European imperial administrators deliberately helped Islam in its battles to get converts. The main reason given is that these early rulers placed Islam on a higher plane than animism because its monotheism was like that of Christianity which many of them practiced. Even one of the most famous authorities on Islam in Africa has written that:

In the early days, government officials showed special consideration for Muslims as people of a higher civilization and often despised the "primitive" pagans. They not only confirmed Muslim chiefs over pagan communities but gave them greater authority.<sup>59</sup>

Such might have been the case in West Africa especially in the densely Muslim areas where pagans were in any case in the minority, but not in Uganda. The early British imperial rulers carried out a well planned and systematic anti-Islamic policy designed to limit and contain Islam in an area no further south than the Sudan border. Such a containment would allow Uganda to become the center and eventually the bridgehead from where Christianity would radiate to all parts of East and Central Africa.

As early as 1892, this policy was clearly noticeable in the actions of British officers then working in Uganda. In that year, Captain Lupard deliberately squeezed the Muslims into three "comparatively small" counties that were very poor in quality.<sup>60</sup> When Sir Harry Johnstone made the Uganda Agreement of 1900, he allotted freehold land to the

various religious groups, that is the White Fathers, the Church Missionary Society and the Mill Hill Fathers but gave nothing to the Muslims. Nuhu Mbogo was the only Muslim who was allotted freehold land but this was done on private basis just as it was done to Apolo Kagwa or S. Mugwanya. When the same official took over the administration of the Protectorate from 1899 to 1901, he crystalized his policy. He was "doggedly opposed" to the spread of Islam in all parts of Uganda especially where it had not set foot such as Busoga for his aim was "to thrust Islam as much as possible into the Sudan."<sup>61</sup> This was because of "the importance of Uganda as a strong bulk walk in Equatorial Africa gradually spreading Christianity to its surroundings"<sup>62</sup> and instructed his lieutenants to deal firmly with any Muslim chief who tried to use his official influence to propagate Islam. A good example is the Salehe incident where Johnstone was told that the former was trying to enforce Islam on his people. The Commissioner reacted by saying that

it is not in the interests of the British Government that Mohammedanism should receive any more adherents than we can help as Muslims are proverbially difficult to manage and are always opposed to the administration of a Christian power.<sup>63</sup>

A full investigation of Salehe's actions was carried out by the District Commissioner who later dismissed the poor chief. Government officials all over the country began to advise chiefs and people that it was

decidedly detrimental to their own interests and their peoples to listen to the teachings of the Mohammedan faction.<sup>64</sup>

Even as late as the 1920's, officials were still implementing this policy, though in a rather subtle and sophisticated way. In 1923, the Provincial Commissioner of Eastern Province wrote to the chief secretary asking him to allow Christian missions to work in Karamoja because there was " . . . a very strong Mohammedan influence which needed some counter influence."<sup>66</sup> In that same year, the Secretary for Native Affairs opposed a move to provide European (western) Education to Muhammedans and complimented those who looked down upon Muslims.<sup>66</sup> Even the chief secretary agreed not to subsidize Muslim education.<sup>67</sup> When the African Muslims at their own initiative went into negotiations to recruit, which they actually did, an Indian teacher, the governor saw it as " . . . a diquieting feature" and endeavored to convince the Baganda who were persuaded with some difficulty" to give up the project.<sup>68</sup> It was a common saying amongst the people of Uganda that whoever became a Muslim would not succeed in life.<sup>69</sup>

The anti-Islamic policy was not a monopoly of the British alone. In other parts of East and Central Africa, European Imperial officers carried out, in various forms, policies intended to discourage Islam. The Belgian method of outright banning and persecution of Muslim carriers in their territory, Congo (now Zaire) was the most manifest one. The Germans in their East African colony (comprising what is now mainland Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi) carried out, or were in the process of carrying, a more sophisticated persecution of Islam. This policy involved of supporting

Muslims in public but undermine Islam from its roots. The German administration, unlike the British in East Africa, built government run schools to which all pupils of all religions went.<sup>70</sup> This was beneficial to Muslims who had no schools of their own. The Germans also employed more Muslims as government officials than the British. But in private, they were planning, officially, to uproot Islam from its base. For example in 1913 Schnee, the governor, sent out a circular to all his German lieutenants asking them to advise him within "three months what means appeared possible in each locality to counter-act efficaciously Islamic propaganda." He asked them whether it was possible to do so by prohibiting teachers to perform the duties of Imam, forbidding circumcision and to pass a law whereby all natives would rear pigs as a source of revenue.<sup>71</sup> This strategy was apparently never put into practice because of the outbreak of the war and Germany's loss of her colonies after the war.

The fear of Islam was not only based on the traditional competition between the Cross and the Crescent but also the stubborn resistance that Islam had put up elsewhere in Africa against Imperialism. Thus in many parts of Africa where Islam had already been planted European Imperialism found that the natives had something that acted as a uniting factor, a cement that put all tribes together in order to fight the invader. In North Africa, the French found that Islam united Berber and Arab to fight the "infedél" in the name of protecting dar' Islam. In Algeria, initial resistance

was led by Amir Abdul Qadir whose father, Muhyi al-Din was a prominent person within the Qadiriyya Brotherhood. He organized the Hashim, the Banu 'Amir and Gharab tribes into a fighting force to defend, so he claimed, Islam against the French. He resisted for ten years till he escaped into Morocco in 1840 and surrendered in 1844. However, another religious leader, Bu Zian raised a revolt in the desert and it was not until the French wiped out the entire population of Za'atsha oasis, where the banner of revolt originated, that he was quelled. In Spanish Morocco, Abdul Karim whose father was a political and religious leader of the Uriaghill resisted the Spanish in the name of Islam. In 1922, He declared the foundation of an Islamic Republic and was able to hold the Rif for some time before he was overwhelmed by a Franco-Spanish expedition led by Marshal P'etain. Similarly, in West Africa, the toughest resistance to European implantation of their rule was led by Muslims.<sup>72</sup> These Muslim rulers justified their resistance by claiming to defend Islam against the infedels. Al-Hajj Umar, who by 1863 had created a Tokolor military empire slowed down French desire to dominate the Western Sudan. Samori Turi whose forces, in the words of a French colonel "fight exactly like Europeans, with less discipline perhaps, but with much great determination" held the French for years.<sup>73</sup> To defeat him, the French used 95 mm siege guns.

Likewise, in East Africa, the toughest and most coordinated resistance to the implantation of colonial rule

was organized by Muslims. According to B. G. Martin, it would seem that the Sultan of Zanzibar in collaboration with the Uwaystya branch of the Qadiriyya brotherhood led by Sheikh Uways bin Muhammad al Barawi planned the elimination of Europeans and their rule throughout the East African mainland.<sup>74</sup> There was, according to Oliver, an anti-European feeling amongst Arabs all over East Africa in the period 1886-90, the period in which the Arabs realized that their trade interests were being undermined. Sulayman bin Zahir al-Jabir al-Barawi who was involved in the Buganda revolution of 1888 was a member of the Qadiriyya and it was believed that he was the Sultan of Zanzibar's emissary. The "Mecca Letter" of 1908 which claimed to foretell the doom of the Germans in East Africa was found by German authorities to have originated from Zanzibar. It was believed to have been written by Muhammad bin Khalifan bin Khamis al-Barawi popularly known as Rumaliza. He was a friend of the Sultan and also a member of the Qadiriyya Brotherhood. The Sultan of Zanzibar sympathized with the Abushiri rebels. There was thus a coordinated Muslim resistance all over East Africa to the implantation of European rule. But unlike the resistance in North Africa, there does not seem to have been Pan-Islamic influences in East Africa from the rest of the Muslim World.<sup>75</sup> The Sultan or any other resistance leaders acted the way they did for their selfish interests and used Islam when it served their purpose. The Sultan of Zanzibar especially guarded the

independence of East Africa from the Middle East. As far as Uganda was concerned, virtually no influence either in form of ideas or men came from the outer Muslim world to preach world wide Muslim unity and to resist with that aim in view. East Africa Muslim resistance to European occupation was local and intended to guard its local independence. It was, however, a resistance to be reckoned with.

The partial success of Muslim resistance in halting and slowing down European occupation, therefore explains the reasons why imperial officers of European powers later on carried out anti-Islamic policies in Uganda, East Africa and indeed all over Africa.

### 3. Christian Missions and Islam

Another popular belief, a misconception, kept alive by amateur writers, is that Christians missions favored and sometimes helped the spread of Islam if it meant the ousting of animism. The reason often given is that Islam is a monotheistic religion and therefore nearer to Christianity than African traditional religions. In Uganda however, the missionaries did not only oppose the spread of Islam amongst the ordinary people by what they told them, but also acted as a pressure group to the government officials to convince the latter to make anti-Islamic decrees.

As Roland Oliver has written, there was a widespread fear amongst missionaries in the late nineteenth century of the expansion of Islam.<sup>76</sup> By 1908, the progress of Islam



and how it should be stopped was on the agenda of every Missionary Conference in East Africa and was filling the pages of missionary magazines in Europe. Bishop Cassian Spiss went to the extent of saying that "Muslims had no morals, were deceitful and all had V.D."<sup>78</sup> They adopted the strategy, and it proved a successful one, of warning colonial officials of the dangers of Islam. Politically, the missionaries argued, Muslims would be less loyal to their Imperial masters than Christians. At the Kolonialkongress at Berlin in 1906, it was argued that a Muslim East Africa would be an anti-European East Africa.<sup>79</sup> In 1906, in Uganda, Bishop Willis feared the "growing possibilities of a Mohammedan advance."<sup>80</sup> He feared that Uganda's nearness to the Sudan made it easy prey for this invasion. He advised all Christians to snatch all virgin souls and lands before Islam captured them. He wrote a letter to the governor (Chief Administrator) of Uganda asking him to declare that Busoga should be a non-Muslim area. Harry Johnstone who was of the same opinion accepted the Bishop's request; at least on paper. Another Anglican Bishop, Tucker, warned the colonial administration against the use of Swahili in elementary schools for this language "was too closely related to Mohammedanism to be welcome."<sup>81</sup> For this reason, the Bishops of four missionary societies engaged in educational work in the protectorate sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State for Colonies protesting against the use of Swahili as the sole medium of instruction in elementary schools in Uganda.<sup>82</sup>

The government agreed. Thus by a stroke of a pen, Uganda was denied the benefit of one language that has brought so much unity in Tanzania and, to some extent, in Kenya.

Further, the missionaries prevented any move by any kind and considerate government official to build neutral schools to which all children of all religions could go. In 1905, George Wilson, the acting governor, wanted to establish a government-aided school to which Muslims could go without fear of being proselytized, but the Anglican Bishop protested both to the Uganda and British governments and the plan was dropped.<sup>83</sup> Again in 1924, Eric Hussey, the Director of Education tried to found government schools to which all people of different faiths could go but the Anglican Bishop protested and the move was dropped. Christian missions thus did not help Islam.

However, this is not to say that all individual missionaries in their personal capacities did not, in any way, help individual Muslims. Missionaries who came to Africa seemed to have hearts full of kindness towards the afflicted. In Uganda, there are a number of Muslims that were admitted to Christian schools and hospitals by kind missionaries. Nyakasun School and King's College admitted an ever expanding trickle of Muslims each year. But these were, however, so few that they did not make much difference.

In conclusion, we could add to the three above mentioned obstacles a number of barriers that Islam had to face

in Uganda. These were, the lack of organized missions and missionaries to plan how to preach Islam. Most of the people who brought Islam to Uganda were traders and taught their religion in their spare time or when they felt it could improve their trade interests. For Muslims in Uganda were, and still are, regarded as a second class citizen not only because of their lack of western education and therefore tastes but also because historically they are a defeated and therefore a despised minority to whose ranks few people wanted to join.

## CHAPTER II: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> See: Harries, Lyndon, H. P. Islam in East Africa (London 1954), pp. 33-65.

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Gee, T. W. "A Century of Mohammedan Influence in Buganda 1851-1951" in Uganda Journal 22, 1958, pp. 139-150.

Oliver, R. The Missionary Factor in East Africa, OUP, London, page. 203.

Trimingham, J. S. Islam in East Africa. OUP, London, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Rosecoe, John. The Bakitara. Cambridge 1923, page 246.

Rosecoe, John. The Baganda, London (Macmillan), 1911, pp. 61-64.

Roscoe, John. The Bayankole, Cambridge, 1923, pp. 108-115.

<sup>3</sup> Mbiti, J.S. African Religions and Philosophy. New York, 1969, page 118.

<sup>4</sup> Nsambu, Sheik Ahmad. Interview with Noel King, Abdu Kasozi and M. W. Watt in 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Circumcision (Ar Khitan). This rite must have been an old custom in Arabia, especially from the mythical days of Abraham, that has been assimilated into Islam. Strictly speaking it is not essential to undergo through it in order to become a good Muslim. But to the uneducated mass of Muslims who think that the external shows of religion are very important, rites like circumcision, abstention from pork, wearing a cap, etc. have become the criterion of Islam. (See Encyclopedea of Islam).

<sup>6</sup> Rose, John. Ph.D. Thesis entitled "Revolution in Buganda 1856-1900," presented to the University of Wisconsin in 1966, page 23.

Stanley, H. M. Dark Continent I, London, page 323.  
Miti. History of Buganda, MSS, in Makerere Library, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Katumba and Welbourn. "Muslim Martyrs of Buganda" Uganda Journal, 28, No. 1964.

- <sup>8</sup>K. W. "Abakama ba Bunyoro-Kitara," Uganda Journal, Vols. 36, 37, 1957,  
Nyakatura, J. W. Abakama ba Bunyoro-Kitara, W. H. Gagne and Sons, Canada 1947, pp. 94-136.
- <sup>9</sup>Welbourn, F. B. Religion and Politics in Uganda, Nairobi (EAPH) 1965, page 55.
- <sup>10</sup>Langlands and Namirembe. Studies on the Geography of Religion in Uganda. Geog. Dept. Paper No. 5, 1967, at Makerere, page 5.
- <sup>11</sup>Kiwanuka, M.S.M. Mutesa of Uganda, (EALB) Nairobi, 1967, page 5.
- <sup>12</sup>Mukasa, Hamu. Simuda Nyuma, ebiro bya Mukabya, London, 1938, pp. 21-22.  
Gomotoka. Makula IV, pp. 2429-2430.
- <sup>13</sup>Bamunoba, Jerome. "Islam in Ankole" in Dina na Milla, Makerere, Vol. I, No. 2, 1964, page 7.
- <sup>14</sup>Dunbar, A. A typescript note in N.Q. King's MSS soon to be published entitled "Islam and the Confluence of R Religion in Uganda," page 156.
- <sup>15</sup>Kagwa. Ekitabo ky'Empisa Z'Abaganda, Uganda Printing and Publishing House, Kampala, 1918, pp. 196-206.
- <sup>16</sup>Roscoe. The Bakitara, pp. 291-304.
- <sup>17</sup>Maulana Abbul-Zaake Matovu. Interview and personal experience.
- <sup>18</sup>Kajane. Munno, December 1912.  
See also Roscoe: Bakitara, page 291.  
Banyankole, page 150.
- <sup>19</sup>J. S. Trimingham. Islam in East Africa, OUP, London.
- <sup>20</sup>Maulid (Ar). Time, place and celebrations of the birth of anyone particularly of the Prophet Mohammed. They were respects to Mohammed which the Quran does not prescribe. In Uganda, the word is used to refer to any Muslim gathering where a feast is served at the end, preferably with rice.
- <sup>21</sup>Zimbe. Buganda n'e Kabaka, p. 105.
- <sup>22</sup>Kulumba. Ebyafayo by'Obuisiramu mu Uganda, Sapoba Bookshop Press, Kampala 1953, page 3.  
Kagwa. (1905), page 17.  
Nsambu. Interview, December 1967.

- 23 Mbiti. African Religions and Philosophy.  
Kagwa. Basekabaka, p. 125.  
Roscoe, J. The Baganda, pp. 91-132.  
The Banyankole.
- 24 The Koran. Sura 17<sup>14</sup>, 69<sup>12-25</sup>, 77, 101<sup>5</sup>, 23<sup>104</sup>.
- 25 Welbourn, F. B. "Some Aspects of Kiganda Religion in Inganda" Uganda Journal 26, No. 2,
- 26 Roscoe, J. The bakitara, p. 21.
- 27 Welbourn, F. B. Op. cit., page
- 28 Kagwa. Basekabaka, p. 209-237.
- 29 Roscoe, J. Bakitara and Banyankole.
- 30 Mbiti, J. S. Op. cit., p. 68.
- 31 Mbiti, J. S. Op. cit., p. 79.
- 32 Kagwa. Empisa, 209-237.  
Roscoe, J. The Banyankole, 28-30.  
Welbourn, F. B. "Buganda Religion" Uganda Journal,  
Vol. 26, No. 2, 1962.
- Mbiti, J. S. Op. cit., p. 165-167.
- 33 Kagwa. Empisa, page 236.
- 34 Zimbe. Buganda, p. 24.
- 35 Nsambu Sheikh. Interview 1967.
- 36 Roscoe. The Baganda, pp. 349, 167, 213, 407, 297,  
315, 327, 29, 65, etc.
- 37 Oberg, K. "The Kingdom of Ankole" in African Political Systems, ed. by M. Forters, p. and Evans-Pritchard.
- 38 Kagwa. Empisa, p. 11.
- 39 Matali (or Duff:). The one used in Uganda is the round form. They are played in a group of seven and each drum produces a different sound depending on its size. Islamic tradition says they were invented by Tabal bin Lamak but others say they were played on the nuptial night or Sulaiman Bilkis.
- 40 The late Sheikh Juma Waiswa of Busoga told me of 25th August 1969 that Matali are so popular in Busoga that if they were banned, Islam in that area would be "diluted."

41 Khamar (Ar. wine) and other forms of alcohol are prohibited to Muslims. Surah 592 of the Quran reads: "oh true believers! Surely wine and misir and stone pillars and divining arrows are an abomination, of the work of satan, therefore avoid them that ye may prosper."

Abu Daud Ashriba wrote that "cursed is he who drinks, buys sells wine or causes others to drink it."

42 Bamunoba. Ibid., pp.

43 Langlands and Namirembe. Ibid., p. 33.

44 Kagwa. Empisa, p. 79.

45 Gomotoka. Makula, Vi, p. 2497.

46 Kagwa. Empisa, p. 247.

47 Roscoe. The Baganda, 445, 197.

48 Roscoe. The Banyankole, p. 200.

49 Kalb (dog) in one of the "unclean beasts" in Islam and its flesh may not be eaten. According to a Hadith, there are special regulations regarding it. Vessels, water, food, plates that have been licked by dogs require to be cleaned several times including one with sand before they are to be used by pious Muslims.

Mukasa, Ham. Simudda Nyumma I, p. 15.

Speke. Journal of Discovery, N.Y., p. 127.

50 Trimingham. Islam in East Africa, p. 148-180.

51 Kagwa. Empisa, page 273.

52 Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma, p. 16.

Kagwa. Basekabaka, p. 129.

53 Kulumba. Ebyafayo, p. 1-2.

Mukasa, H. Simudda Nyuma, p. 15.

54 Kavulu, D. A paper (typescript) intended for Nairobi social science conference, December, 1969.

55 Samula Kimuli, Ph.D. Typescript in Department of Religious Studies.

56 Serugo-Lugo. UMSA Report, p. 32.

57 Welbourn, F. B. Religion and Politics in Uganda, p. 6.

58 Kagwa. Empisa, page 58. 65.

59 J. S. Trimingham. A History of Islam in West Africa, OUP, London 1962, p. 226. Admittedly this is a popular rather than an academic myth. It is a myth that is popularized in travel logs, missionary magazines and newspapers. Few serious students hold on it. For more details of the relationship between early Imperial rulers and Islam in Africa see the following:

Roland Oliver. The Missionary Factor in East Africa, OUP, 1964, pp. 203-215.

Lewis, I. M. Islam in Tropical Africa (I.A.I.), Oxford, 1966, pp. 72-82.

Carter, F. Ibid., pp. 193-9.

Roberts, S. H. The History of French Colonial Policy 1870-1925, (1963 reprint), pp. 313-20.

P. Marty. Etudes sur l'Islam au Senegal 1917.

Monteil, Vicent. L'Islam Noir, 1964, Paris.

60 Lugard, F. D. The Rise of Our East African Empire, Vol. II, 1893, pp. 439-40.

61 Johnston to Tucker, 1st December 1900, Entebbe Government Archives; A-23.

62 Uganda Report for 1903-04, Entebbe Government Archives.

63 H. M. Commissioner (Johnstone) to Busoga, 3rd Dec. 1900 Busoga Correspondences; Item 1/53 A 11/1/53, Outward, Entebbe Government Archives.

64 H. M. Terrant, Acting Collector, Busoga to H. M. Commissioner, Entebbe, 10 Dec. 1900 Busoga Inward 1900-1901 A. 10/1, 2, 43 Entebbe Government Archives.

65 G. W. Guy Eden to Chief Secretary, 30 Nov. 1923 Entebbe Government Archives S.M.P. No 1307/1908.

66 Carter, Felice. Ibid., p. 196.

67 See S.M.P. 4784, Entebbe Government Archives.

68 W. F. Gowers to the Secretary of State for Colonies 5th Oct. 1925 Entebbe Government Archives S.M.P. 6900/54.

69 The Basoga for example have a poetical saying:  
"Enuere, Enuere owe  
Waloba obwami owadimula"  
that is if you become a Muslim you will never be a chief.

70 Tanganyika Notes and Records, No. 62/63, 1964, pp. 83-90.



- 71 Moshi Records, Entebbe Government Archives S.M.P. 4784. The Moshi Records were circulars, captured from Moshi during the First World War at Moshi, North Tanganyika. They were sent to the British Intelligence Office in Cairo where they were translated into several languages and then used as propaganda by the British "to show the hypocrisy of the Germans." There is a possibility that they were made by the British War Office in its campaign to win the "psychological warfare" amongst the Muslims especially since the Ottoman Empire, then the defender of the Muslim faith was fighting on the side of the Germans. We cannot, however, prove this.
- 72 Kanya-Forstener, A. S. The Conquest of the Western Sudan. A study in French Military Imperialism; (Cambridge), 1969.
- 73 Kanya-Forstener, A. S. Ibid., p. 187.
- 74 Martin, B. G. "Muslim Politics and Resistance to Colonial Rule: Sheikh Uways bin Muhammad al-Barawi and the Qadiriyya Brotherhood in East Africa" in Journal of African History X, 1969, pp. 471-486.  
Also see: Roland Oliver, Missionary Factor in East Africa, OUP, p. 109.
- 75 Edmund Burke III.
- 76 R. Oliver. Ibid., p. 205.
- 78 Tanganyika Notes and Records, No. 62/63, 1964, pp. 83-90.
- 79 Oliver, R. Ibid., p. 206.
- 80 Willis J. J. Mengo Notes, August 1906, p. 23.
- 81 Tucker, Bishop. Eighteen Years in Uganda, 1911, p. 262.
- 82 Education Department Annual Report, 1931, p. 5; Entebbe Government Archives.
- 83 Carter, Felice. Ibid., p. 193.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE WEAKENING OF TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

The spread of Islam can best be understood if reviewed in the context of the situation prevailing a century or so before and immediately after the great ideological and material forces that invaded the interlacustrine area of Eastern Africa in the nineteenth century. At about this time, the African traditional way of life was undergoing a weakening process that was uprooting the base upon which traditional beliefs were built. As the weakening process gathered momentum, great ideological and material forces from the outside world invaded this part of Africa. The influence of these foreign beliefs accelerated the weakening process to such an extent that they set in motion a revolution that transformed not only the religious but also the social fabric of the Baganda people.

Islam was one of the ideologies or beliefs that made their way into Ugandan society as traditional beliefs weakened at this period. As I shall show in a later chapter, it spear-headed the forces that ignited the embers of the social revolution that transformed Buganda and later the whole country of Uganda. Thus to find out why some people became Muslims, we should first ask ourselves why did the

Ugandans foresake their own beliefs for new ones. Why did they join foreign religions so quickly? What did the new ones offer that their own did not? Under what circumstances did they join foreign religions? After answering these questions as best as we can, then we should study each individual religion to find out how it penetrated African society.

In this chapter, I shall try to show that the people of Uganda joined foreign religions because their own beliefs had, and were still undergoing, a disruptive process. This disruptive process led to a weakening or, in some cases, a complete disruption of African traditions, customs and ways of life which in turn created a partial "belief vacuum" in the minds of men. As a result, the African conception of the universe and the environment in which he lived was put into chaos. The religions he understood, the social structure with which he was familiar and the political system he was accustomed to obey were being attacked and undermined in every way. Such state of affairs, naturally, created doubt in man's confidence in his own beliefs that eventually led to a crisis of confidence in his way of life.

Thus, because the beliefs of the African peoples were weakened, dislocated or destroyed and because man cannot endure for long a period of "no belief," the Ugandan people were ready to receive and adopt new religions when the latter appeared on the scene in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In showing how this happened, I shall concentrate on Buganda

and later show how the rest of the country was affected. This is not out of selfish or tribal motivation but because of the following reasons:

First, Islam and indeed Christianity made its first inroads into Uganda in Buganda and did not invade other areas in force till after 1890. Secondly, it was mainly the rejected Baganda Muslims, after Christianity had conquered the kingdom, that took Islam to the rest of Uganda either as political refugees or as agents of the British Imperial Government. Thirdly, as I showed in the introduction to this study, about 41.7% of Uganda's Muslims are found in Buganda. And finally, even those figures of Muslims found in many other parts of Uganda such as Ankole, Toro, Kigezi, Teso, and Bukedi represent a large number of Baganda or people of Buganda extraction. For example, in Ankole, according to Rev. Jerome Bamunoba, to become a Muslim is to become a Muganda. One not only adopts the Ganda way of life but also speaks Luganda.<sup>2</sup> We shall therefore focus our attention, as we try to show how African traditional beliefs gradually weakened and facilitated the eventual adoption of foreign beliefs on Buganda.

There are many reasons why a people changes its beliefs to that of other people. I do not intend to exhaust them except to mention a few in passing before we analyse how the Baganda decided to adopt new religions. By belief system, I mean any set of commonly held ideas which a group of people have about their society and life in general. A religion

as Durkheim has defined it, is a unified system of beliefs relative to the sacred. Religion by itself or in association with other beliefs could be a belief system. I shall use the word belief to embrace all ideas which people hold about their society and the world at large and religion to refer to only those ideas that are held in reference to the sacred. The most ancient and well established way in which one society changed its beliefs was through force of conquest by another group of people who imposed their ideas on the conquered. Thus the religion of Etruscan, Assyrian and Phoenician city-states perished with the downfall of their supremacy and had to take the religions and beliefs of the conquerors.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians, Assyrian and Hittite city cults exported a lot of their religion to their conquered. The Arabs spread Islam in almost every region they conquered such as Syria, Persia, North Africa and the far Orient. In exceptional cases, however, the conquerors may embrace the beliefs of the vanquished. Thus most of the conquerors of the Nile Valley were, in most cases, drafted into the ancient Egyptian fold of Pharonic Egypt. The Romans though conquerors in military terms were conquered by the Greek culture and language. But these are a few examples.

Turning to Africa, it would be expected that people would adopt the beliefs of the colonial conquerors after the latter had subdued all resistance. This was in fact what happened in many areas. African tribes were converted en mass after the establishment of colonialism to the religions

of the conqueror. It was expedient to do so. In Buganda however, conversion took place before colonialism. The Baganda people not only adopted the religion of the invader before he conquered their county, but also invited him to teach them his religion which they claimed was better than theirs. Why were the Baganda so eager to foresake their beliefs? Was it because Christianity and Islam were "more true" than African beliefs as some would like us to believe?

The answer, I feel, must be searched for from within the African society at that time. There must have been something from within Ganda society that favored this desire for a change in beliefs. There are obviously many factors that tend to favor a change of beliefs that originates from within a society such as: One, the growing differentiation in the sociological, political and cultural structure of the society. Two, and in most cases arising from the latter, the increasing differences among the members of society in property, occupation, rank and prestige and thirdly the action of the elite. One or all these factors might be at work in a complex society that is gradually changing its beliefs. In Africa, however, where society was rural and simple, one of the commonest ways people changed their beliefs was through the disintegration, partial or complete, of the tribal set up. Such a disintegration could happen either through conquest or failure of the central organization to hold together the values and bonds of the tribe together. A. D. Low quoting John Moffart, brother-in-law

of David Livingstone is of the same opinion. In a letter to Unwin, John Moffart wrote that:

. . . it is where the political organization is most perfect, and the social system still in its aboriginal vigor that the missionary has least success of making an impression. Where things have undergone a change the old feudal usage have lost their power, where there is a measure of disorganization, the new ideas which the gospel brings with it do not come into collision with any powerful prejudice. The habits and modes of thinking have been broken up, and so there is a preparation for the seed of the word. I am not sanguine on this point to the Matabele."<sup>4</sup>

As a matter of fact, he did not succeed amongst the Matabele since they still had their "aboriginal vigor." But amongst the Tswana who had been broken up, dispersed and demoralized by defeat, the gospel easily penetrated.

Buganda at this time was, in the political sphere, very strong and firm. But in other spheres of life, the Baganda had lost their "aboriginal vigor" which made them receptive to foreign beliefs. For a hundred years or so before the mid nineteenth century, Buganda had been undergoing substantial changes which though they did not destroy the political set up, nevertheless caused stress and eventually weaknesses in almost all aspects of society. In Buganda, and indeed in most of other African societies, man conceived himself as a part of the universe with which he had to live in complete peace. Such a peace was only possible if there was a proper respect of the powers above and fair treatment of the lesser elements below man. The aim of man was to maintain a proper balance of the various spheres of powers. These were the religious, the social,

the economic and the political. As "religion permeated into all departments" of life, the orders in which these powers were arranged, the roles they played in the lives of the community, their relation to inanimate things like sky, earth, moon, etc. and the way the world went on from day to day were viewed in a religious perspective.<sup>5</sup> The total impression they created on the minds of the individuals plus, a number of other factors, contributed in a great measure to their belief system. At the beginning, this belief system must have imposed itself heavily on the minds of the individuals. But a gradual change dating from the early eighteenth century (roughly in the reigns of Kyabagu, Junju and Ssemakokiro) through the nineteenth century began to mow and chew slowly the roots of the Baganda beliefs so that by the time foreign religions came into Buganda, they were in a state of disruption, a state which foreign religions exploited. I must emphasize that this process of weakening was slow, gradual and cannot easily be mapped. We can however say that it reached its climax in the Revolution of 1888 when the new order politically overthrew the old one and imposed its values on everyone else. After 1888, the disintegration of the old order went far faster than before. Let us now begin the task of tracing the changes that took place in (1) the religious (2) the social (3) the economic and (4) the political spheres.



## 1. Changes in Religious Beliefs

The gradual undermining of the traditional religions by the monarchy and the former's inability to cope with the changing world weakened the faith the Baganda had in these religions. I do not intend, in this short work, to give a full account of these religions as they have been well studied by various authorities.<sup>6</sup> The Baganda, like any other African people at this time, practiced a natural and ethnic religion. It was natural and ethnic in the sense that only people belonging to the tribe of the Baganda practiced it. An outsider had to undergo through a long acculturation and literally had to become a Muganda before he could practice it. The Baganda had some ideas of an Almighty or Supreme Being whom they called Katonda. Nsimbi mentions that Muwanga as the leader of gods and all things seems to have been the Supreme Being.<sup>7</sup> However, he was so far away from human experience that he was not regularly worshipped by the ordinary people. Katonda had a temple in Kyagwe but it was not proportional, in size, to the cosmos which he was supposed to have created. Then there was a collection of ultra-humans consisting of (a) purely spiritual beings and (b) gods that were once humans but have since been defied. These were called (Ba)Lubaale. Some of these were Mukasa of Lake Victoria and "Zeus" of Buganda, Musoke of the rainbow, Kiwanuka of thunder, Kibuuka of war, Kawumpuli of plague, Musisi of earthquake, Ndaula or Kawali of smallpox and many others. These were nationally known

all over Buganda and so we could regard them as national gods.

Kagwa says that there were twenty-three Balubale altogether.<sup>8</sup> Then there were spiritual beings--Misambwas-- that could assume a natural form. They could manifest themselves as a lion, a leopard or a beautiful girl with whom one could fall in love, take home, where leaving her human form she could disappear and be gone with the wind. Then there was the tribal mythology of the origin of the tribe that was given a religious dressing. Apparently the Kintu cult, the founder of the Kingdom was not as widely practiced as across the Nile in Busoga. There was also the much discussed ancestral cult. The Baganda loved their ancestors and paid due homage to them. There were taboos and regulations about how to deal with ceremonies connected with ancestors. Whether this was ancestor worship or not is subject to much discussion and doubt.<sup>9</sup> In individual families or clans there were taboos looked at in a religious perspective concerning "rites de passage" i.e., ceremonies marking the critical stages of life of pregnancy, birth, naming, puberty, initiation, marriage, and death. Ceremonies to mark these stages were articulately and ceremoniously observed as Roscoe has written. Within Kiganda society itself, there were what Mbiti has called the specialists of the African Societies such as rainmakers, diviners, priests, mediums, medicinemen, divine rulers who were also part of the religious hierarchy in the sense that they had powers

that ordinary humans did not. This might be due to superior knowledge or through the favor of the sacred that imparted some of her power to these specialists. In Buganda, the mediums occupied a special place and as we shall see later they occasionally clashed with the Kabaka. Gods and other spiritual beings were spoken to through these mediums--who were in many cases women. The most important mediums were those of the national gods (balubaale) and those administering the cult of the dead Kings. There were also objects or "fetishes" that people regarded with religious awe. Roscoe says that "they were the nearest approach to idols" though in fact it was not the objects that people cared for so much as the power those objects could tap on behalf of human beings.

It is not clearly stated in the sources when the Kabakas' power came to surpass that of the gods and the religious sector of the Kingdom. It seems to me that formerly, the sacred powers and their influence was a factor to be reckoned with in the country. Thus when Kabaka Juuko tried to arrest a traditional doctor who had, without permission cured the King's son, the doctor appealed to the gods. The gods ordered the sun to stop and so there was no light till the wrong was rectified.<sup>10</sup> When Kabaka Tebandeke wrongly executed the mediums who demanded fees for curing his sons, they made him mad and he ended up by becoming a medium himself.<sup>11</sup>

But then from the reign of Ndaula onwards, there was

a gradual strengthening of the Kabaka's power vis-a-vis the religious sphere.\* The Kabaka had more power not in the sense that he controlled the gods and could always tell them what to do but that whenever there was a serious clash between the two, the Kabaka came out victorious. Later on, of course, as we shall see, he had occasions to dictate terms, but they also had their minor sphere of influence. Thus we find that Kabaka Ndaula refused to be a medium, thus separating the political from the religions and giving the latter position to someone below him. Kabaka Kyabaggu executed the Bassesse mediums who complained because he did not give them enough meat.<sup>12</sup> Mutesa I was even more skeptical about the religions establishment in Buganda. He made a pact with Mujabi Omutabuza cementing their disbelief in traditional Ganda religion. The pact was to the effect that if one of them died first and a mandwa or medium claimed to speak for his spirit, the survivor would ask a pre-arranged set of questions. One false answer would reveal the falsity and unmask the pretensions of the Mandwas. When Mujabi was killed in Bunyoro in 1869, the Kabaka ordered the arrest of the Mandwas and he stripped them off most of their property.<sup>13</sup> Mutesa appointed, after the fall of Mayanja, Wamala, clansman of the Queenmother who was an uncle, as Katikiro though by traditional beliefs this was not allowed. The religious and traditional men grumbled but he did not change his mind.<sup>14</sup> He attacked the religions of the clans by ordering that in future only sons were to

inherit rather than brothers or other clansmen selected by members of the clan of the dead person.<sup>15</sup> Thus, gradually the national religion came to be under the supervision of the king. Of course the king's pressure over the religious establishment varied from king to king. By the nineteenth century, however;

the national shrines of the major gods were large scale affairs and their activities centered upon the Kabaka and the central government.<sup>16</sup>

John Roscoe tells us that in fact the king controlled the gods when he wrote that:

The worship of the national gods was under the immediate control of the king; their first and principle duty was the protection of the king and state. . . . He would if one vexed him, send and loot his temple and estate.<sup>17</sup>

Welbourn writing seventy years later comes to the conclusion that:

the evidence is that Mutesa I, and probably his father Suna before him was increasingly skeptical about ultra-human powers. . . . The Ganda were to make, if not of him, at least his grandson as their symbol of ultimate concern.<sup>18</sup>

By attacking, and successfully defeating the religious establishment, the Kabaka undermined their authority. In the eyes of the ordinary people, the Kabaka must have been increasingly regarded as the real force in both the secular and the sacred. Moreover, he was the Buganda, a title he assumed when he "ate the kingdom" at his coronation. In modern terms we would say that the Ganda king became a sacral monarchy since he had become the supreme representative of the religion of the country. But unlike other kings

described by sociologists, he was neither a god nor an incarnation of a god.<sup>19</sup> He was merely the supreme controller of the religious and political powers of the state in whom both these powers were identified in a human form. Increasingly, the ordinary people began to look to the king for religious guidance. Thus when Mutesa, who was sophisticated enough to separate his religious and political roles, embraced Islam, his subjects followed suit.<sup>20</sup> When he later decided to abandon it, all followed him. He had become the symbol of their religion as well as the controller of their political destiny.

Besides the Kabaka, the traditional religions were further discredited and therefore weakened in the eyes of the people by their failure to fulfill what they were supposed to do and later, to cope with changes that took place after the coming of foreigners. Thus after the December crisis when Mackay tried to intervene against the traditionalists, the Lubaale were given a chance to heal the king's illness. They failed and the king appealed to the white missionaries.<sup>21</sup> When Mwanga was conspiring to maroon the "Readers" on an island, he, together with other traditional diehards, consulted the gods about the successful outcome of their enterprise. The gods predicted a positive outcome and so Mwanga went forward with it. But in the end the whole plot aborted which gave further disrepute to the traditional gods.<sup>22</sup> Instead of compromising with the new beliefs, the traditional diehards stuck to confrontation and when Mwanga

was defeated, that was the signal of their eventual decline.

In a way, as many writers have pointed out, Kiganda traditional religion did not act as an integrative force for the unity and cohesion of society. Lucy Mair is of the opinion that in Kiganda religion:

there was no ceremony in which it was obligatory for anyone outside the servants of the temple to participate, no occasion of a national gathering such as is recorded among (other) Bantu and certainly no gathering of kinsmen at the temple of the Lubaale.<sup>23</sup>

John Rowe has added that Kiganda traditional Religion "lacked unity, form, discipline, dogma or organization" that could act as a rallying emblem that could cement the whole nation together on a religious basis.<sup>24</sup> Traditional religion in Buganda seems to have been weakened to the extent that by 1870, it had no strength or stamina to resist foreign beliefs. A. D. Low is of the opinion that

there does not seem to have been anything in the indigenous religion which was culturally essential by the 1870's as an expression of tribal sentiment for solidarity and continuity. There were for instance no great tribal festivals . . . such sentiments were focused on the Kabaka. . . . There was no firmly entrenched ancestor worship to provide a stumbling block to the new religions.<sup>25</sup>

Even worse for the traditional religions, was the realization by the people that their beliefs, especially their religions, were no longer able to cope with the world, to explain the mysteries of the universe and to do what a belief system is supposed to do. When this happens, a crisis of confidence arises. Thus according to Stone, it was the crisis of confidence amongst the aristocracy of England in their position as the cream of society that accelerated

their downfall in the period of 1558-1641.<sup>26</sup> It was probably partly due to the loss of confidence in the "white man's burden" that made European nations liquidate their Empires in Africa and Asia in the twentieth century.<sup>27</sup> It would be difficult, if not impossible, to plot the map of those Baganda that had lost confidence in their beliefs. The historian can only depend on a few whose thoughts were committed to paper. One of these Baganda who had doubt in his way of life was Mathias Kalemba, a chief of some importance. He told Pere Livinhac that

My father had always believed that the Baganda did not have the truth and his sought it in his heart. He had often mentioned this to me and before his death he told me that men would one day come to teach us the right way. These words made a profound impression on me, and whenever the arrival of some stranger was announced, I watched him saying to myself that here, perhaps, was the man announced by my father.<sup>28</sup>

If this story is true, it shows that the Baganda no longer had confidence in their beliefs. It also indicates that their hearts were open for ideas from "strangers."

Thus by the time Islam and Christianity came to Buganda, traditional religions were weak. They had been undermined by the power of the king, weakened by their inability to fulfill their *raison detre*, did not act as a uniting force of the tribe and people had begun to doubt their truth and validity. When foreign religions were introduced as we shall see, the weakening process went even faster. New men, especially the young, who had not as yet gotten drunk of the "aboriginal vigor" took to the new



religions like a fish to water.

## 2. The Social Sector

In the social sphere, the people were formerly accustomed to pay their humble respects to their clans and to live (and obey) by certain customs and traditions that they thought kept their society alive and happy. But over the course of time that we are dealing with, the power that was due to the clan heads was gradually undermined by the kings. Secondly, the kings, especially Suna and Mutesa, by violating and abolishing a number of these customs weakened the confidence the people had in the latter.

A clan is a natural grouping in the sense that members of each clan were composed of people related by blood or claimed the same ancestor. It had a totem which acted as its emblem, the symbol or if you like, its flag that served as the rallying point for all members of the clan. These totems (for example a lion, grasshopper, monkey) were sacred to the clan members who never destroyed or ate their meat. All members of the same clan in the same generation were, and still are, called brothers and the women sisters. There was no intermarriage between people of the same clan except in a few such as the bushbuck and lungfish clans. Each clan had its family estate looked after by the clan-head or Mutaka. The clansmen who settled on such estates were called Bataka, a plural of Mutaka.<sup>29</sup> Many writers are of the view that in the beginning, Buganda was organized on

clan institutions with each clan leader master of his own area until, Kintu, the legendary first Kabaka of Buganda united them into one political entity.<sup>30</sup> They thus played not only a social but also a political role. Kagwa records that long ago the Kabaka was just one amongst the many clanheads in the country. Kiwanuka is of the view that the Bataka were a united power group and that if they played their cards well, they could rebuff the king.<sup>31</sup>

But for over the two or so centuries before the coming of Islam, the power of the Kabaka gradually moved from the position of "primus inter-pares" among heads of patrilineal descent groups to that of a despotic monarchy to the disadvantage of the clanheads. It was during the reign of Mutebi (in the mid (17th) that the mightiness of the Bataka began to be heavily reduced. Of this, Kagwa has written:

Until the reign of Mutebi, the Bataka were very important . . . because formerly they had great honor and ruled themselves in their own areas. But when their fellow, the Kabaka, became more exalted than they, he began to lord it over them and to drive them out of their lands. For this reason, they were disgusted and refused to see him.<sup>32</sup>

Their power whereby they controlled the election of a king by devising a system whereby each clan could produce a successor also declined.<sup>33</sup> Richards noted that Kagwa informed Roscoe that to weaken the power of clanheads, the Kabakas first appointed as clanheads loyal supporters of their own who happened to be members of the clan of the previous holder of office. The next step was to appoint a

personal representative of the crown to live near the border of the clan territory and to report on how things were going. These kings' representatives finally assumed administrative control over districts as governors or Ssaza chiefs while the clan authorities were limited to ruling over the hills where their ancestors were buried. It is true that some territories and important positions such as Kasujju of Busujju, Katambala of Butambala, Kitunzi of Gomba, the Kimbugwe and a few minor ones were still hereditary but as we shall see later in this chapter, they had their problems. Some tyrannical Kabakas did not hesitate in deposing them or snatching their property. As for the clan leaders, by the nineteenth century, they had been reduced to performing clan duties and ruling out jurisdiction in clan courts over succession, marriage and other disputes within the clan members.<sup>34</sup> By mid nineteenth century, therefore, the power and thus the social status of the clanheads were already weakened if not at a point of collapse. The Kabaka was not only the head of the administrative organ of the state; he was also, in his title as Ssabataka (leader of the clanheads), "the father of all clans" in the country. Of this change Apter has concluded that:

. . . when the clan system began to suffer from the conflict produced by the client chieftainship, authority shifted to the hierarchical type. Traditional religion declined. Social atomism increased. The solidary institutional structure of Buganda changed from one having many varied independent and centralized centers to a highly individualistic type of allegiance of a Muganda to Kabaka.<sup>35</sup>

The effect of this shift on the minds of the common people was to cause a shift of loyalty away from the clanheads to the king. A Muganda could change his loyalty to the clan and hide under the umbrella of another clan as happened after the fall of Kagulu when the latter's clansmen were persecuted and sought refuge in other clans, but never the loyalty towards the Kabaka or monarchy of Buganda. During and after the religious wars, loyalty was no longer to the clan but to one's religion. No longer could a person of a clan give security as was the case in the past in Buganda, to a clansman. He could however give it to those of his own religion. Thus Ssekimwanyi records the song which the Muslims composed as they were being pursued:

Those who believe in and expect protection from clansmen are the ones whose skulls we see on the roads. I would rather die running than take refuge with a clansman. They will kill me on the run rather than in someone else's house. I would rather be caught running than burned alive.<sup>36</sup>

Kiwanuka writes that this song was composed in the period 1890-1893 and demonstrates how "Kiganda society had been torn asunder. Its theme is that the social cords which had hitherto bound man to man, family to family, and clan to clan had disappeared. Neither former friend nor clansmen had any mercy upon those who worshipped God in the wrong way."<sup>37</sup>

The final blow to the clan heads came in 1900 when Sir Harry Johnston, probably through misinformation, gave permanent freehold land to prominent Baganda (essentially

to those who collaborated with British Imperialism in Uganda) without caring to investigate who had a claim to a particular piece of land. Many clan lands and burial plots were given to people of other clans and this further contributed to the loosening the already weak clan system.

On top of that there were other customs that were deeply rooted in society that were broken, in most cases, at the initiative of the Kabaka. This tended to weaken not only the bonds of society but also to confuse the ordinary people and to put the way they looked at the universe in a chaotic state. It seems that the Kabaka's attacks on hereditary rulers such as Kagulu's execution of the hereditary Mugema, Kyabagu's successful dismissal of the Mugema and many others contributed to the weakening of the faith people had in the social order. The Kabakas violated a number of customs and in some cases abolished them completely. Thus John Rowe reports that Ssuuna ordered that the jawbones of his ancestors to be joined to their heads.<sup>38</sup> Mutesa I told his chiefs that "upon my death, you will bury me in the royal house with my skull unmolested"<sup>39</sup> thus violating a time long social custom of separating the skull from the body and keeping a temple for it while the body was buried in another place. Mutesa I did not stop there; he ordered that his ancestors bones should be exhumed and reburied with their skulls and body.<sup>40</sup> He also ordered that no one should pretend to be possessed by his spirit and prophesy in his name.<sup>41</sup> Such an action touched the center of Baganda religious

spirit and Kingship cults and the roles they played in cementing society together. Ssekimwanyi and Katungulu assert that Mutesa refused circumcision not so much out of fear of violating African customs though this was obviously used as an excuse, but out of fear of the reaction of the chiefs who might use it as an excuse to dethrone him.<sup>42</sup>

Mutesa also abolished the custom whereby the King ate alone and the food left over was thrown away or given to a favorite dog.<sup>43</sup>

To conclude I would say that the transference of the power that was due to the clans to the monarchy and the disrespect of certain traditional customs weakened the bonds of society. Later when world religions were introduced, the new conception of one God meant the weakening and or dissolution of clan ties followed by the simultaneous creation of new ones based on religion and the undermining of family unity except in cases where all members of the same family (or relation) joined one religion. This, however, is not to say that the clan system was wiped out completely. Indeed it remained and survives to this day. But it is far weaker than before. Where it used to be a criterion for unity and identification, Islam, Protestantism or Roman Catholicism have replaced it. The religious cults of the clans have almost been wiped out for clan temples, clan mediums and clan religious ceremonies disappeared with traditional religion.

### 3. The Economic Sector

Land was the base upon which the economy of Buganda rested. In theory, it was owned by all people and the king together with the clanheads were only trustees. In practice, however, the clanheads and later the king had power to distribute it to the peasants. Peasant cultivation of small family plots distributed to them by their superiors was the main means of production. As we have observed earlier, the clanheads at first were the controllers of land and distributed it to their peasant clansmen according to the customs of the clan. However, when the king assumed more powers than the clanheads especially after acquiring, through conquest, new territories such as Buddu in the reign of Junju, he became the main land broker in the country. He not only had more land to give to loyal supporters, the king's men, but also had become powerful enough to grab land from those who had traditionally owned it. Increasingly, the peasants came to look upon the king and his lieutenants if they wanted land instead of their clanheads.

Other traditional articles of wealth were livestock, especially cattle and goats, bark cloth and later iron implements. Formerly, the clanheads and other traditional elites might have competed with the king in their possession of these riches. But when Buganda began to undertake a series of raids against her neighbors, the king became far richer than any other man in the land. Cattle, women and slaves were often captured and added to the royal treasury.

This was the case in the reigns of Junju and his brother Ssemakokiro. Trade with the outside world which began in the eighteenth century made the kings even richer than before.<sup>44</sup> Cotton cloth, brass wire, cowrie shells, some china pottery and other goods were exchanged for ivory. Firearms began to come in the nineteenth century. The Kabakas, especially from the reign of Ssemakokiro became monopolistic traders and thereby controlled the wealth in the land. For the rest of the people, the only way to get rich was no longer to look to the clanheads or any other traditional elite but to the king. The traditional hereditary elite was thus weakened by the concentration of wealth in the hands of the Kabaka.

Furthermore, the effect of the new utilitarian goods that came from the outside was to weaken the faith the people had in their own material goods. This is because the foreign goods were superior in the sense that they performed the duties they were supposed to do better than the locally produced ones. As a result the position of the local technicians together with the goods they made and the religious aspect connected with both, were undermined. The gun and other firearms were far superior than the local spear, if properly used. This meant that the spearman and spearmakers became auxiliaries. The ironsmelters, who were mainly found in Buddu and Koki began to gradually lose their position. Certain clans like the bushbuck were associated with ironsmelting. As ironsmelting began to lose ground, so did the



taboos of a religious nature that were connected with that industry.<sup>45</sup> Cotton cloth began to slowly, but steadily, replace the bark cloth. This was obviously a slow process especially among the common people. However, it was fast among the elite. By the time Stanley came, almost all important chiefs at Mutesa's court were dressed in cotton or other woven cloths imported from the outside world. Bark cloths were originally the national dress of the Baganda. Buganda exported some of them to her neighbors in exchange for other goods. But as cotton cloths spread, not only did the bark cloth makers gradually lose their former positions in the society but taboos connected with bark cloth making became increasingly meaningless.

The introduction by foreigners of better ways of healing the sick especially by chemical medicine undermined the trust the African people had in their drugs and medicine men. When the Arabs came to Uganda, they introduced two types of healing the sick that was far superior in curing the people, than the local medicines. The first was the use of chemical medicines, often manufactured in the West. The second method which was used either to buttress the first, or in isolation, was to use the Koranic or "Islamic" medicine. This often consisted of reading the Koran after the patient had been given chemical medicine or just praying to God without use of drugs. So much did Arab medicine succeed in impressing the Baganda that Mutesa I used to call upon them for treatment. Kagwa reports that he used to go and

collect such medicine from one of the Arabs. Abdalla Mutabibi was, for example, called upon to attend to Mutesa's illness in 1884. It is reported that he prescribed a number of conditions which Mutesa I failed to fulfill. As a result, the story goes, Mutesa I died.<sup>46</sup> In 1877, the Baganda were so much convinced in Arab "magic" and medicine that they believed Idi had averted the falling of the sun (an eclipse) by reading the Koran and other books. When whites came as missionaries, they brought even far superior medicine, and other materials that must have increased the undermining of confidence in local materials. Pere Lourdel cured Mutesa of dysentery, a disease the local doctors could not stop, and was acclaimed the savior of Buganda.<sup>47</sup> Dr. Felking did a lot to ease if not to cure Mutesa of syphilis which had given him a hard time for a long period. In African societies especially Buganda, ability to cure diseases had a lot of religious implications since diseases were viewed as either gods or devils manifesting themselves as diseases. In Buganda for example Kaumpuli, the plague was a God and so was Kawali, the smallpox.<sup>48</sup> Whoever was able to cure such a disease was either stronger than the gods of those diseases, or he had a secret way of talking to them. Obviously such a person and his ideas were given high respect. This was especially so since the Baganda, an acquisitive people, put a great value on material goods. Mackay who had a practical knowledge of almost anything he laid his hand on such as gun mending, carpentry, brick building, etc.

impressed the Baganda so much that they referred to him as a God (i.e. Makayi Lubaale ddala). Choli (or Tori) the favorite Arab at Mutesa's court around 1875 was "Chief drummer, engineer and jack-of-all trades." He knew how to repair guns and perfected the Baganda art of ironmongery. For these reasons the king and the people loved him, elevated him to a high position in their society and respected his ideas.<sup>49</sup> It has been observed that the degree of intensity to which the Baganda committed themselves either to Islam or to Christianity, among a number of other minor causes, depended on the amount of materials that a particular group of outsiders happened to bring. Thus whenever a rich Arab came with a lot of goods, there was an intensification of Islamic influence. This was certainly the case when Khamis came in 1867.<sup>50</sup> Gale is of the view that part of Mutesa's keen interest in Christian teaching was brought about by Stanley's gifts and help in tribal wars.<sup>51</sup>

Since the Baganda believed there was a connection between the material and the spiritual, they concluded that the superiority of the foreigners' technical knowledge that enabled them to produce such goods was intimately connected and eventually related to their religions. Some foreigners also encouraged this trend of thought to develop as true. Thus when Mackay was discussing the steam engine at the Kabaka's court, he said that the king:

. . . after much talk he asked me how whitemen came to know so much, did they always know them? I replied that once Englishmen were savages and knew nothing at

all, but from the day we became Christians our knowledge grew more and more and every year we were wiser than before.

King: I guess God will not prosper any man that does please him.

Reply: God is kind to all but especially to those who love and fear him.

All: Eeh, Eeh (yes, yes).<sup>52</sup>

The foreigners, it would seem, encouraged this belief of the link between the material and the spiritual. Since foreign materials and tools were superior to the local ones, the reasoning went, their religion was superior than the local ones.

#### 4. The Political Sector

The purely political sector of society underwent changes that must have been difficult for the ordinary people to understand. We have already showed how the Kabaka's power came to dominate those of the social and religious establishment and how his hand gripped more tightly on the economy of the kingdom. Formerly, as we have already noted, the Kabaka was a leader among equals and his powers were like those of a desert sheik whose word is the concensus of elders rather than, of himself alone. He had to consult, before he made any significant move the clanheads and other hereditary establishment. But he gradually assumed more political power. Kintu, was probably the first king to unite the clanheads under one central authority.<sup>53</sup> The monarchy did not assume the overall powerful position in the

16th, 17th and early part of the 18th centuries. It was partly due, as Kiwanuka has pointed out, to the still shaky monarchy that Kagulu was deposed by a rebellion of the whole population of Buganda. Mwanga I was quietly and quickly executed without chaos taking over the country. But gradually things began to change. The kings eliminated all other centers of power and concentrated it in their own hands. By the mid nineteenth century;

. . . the king had acquired complete administrative control over Buganda. He appointed his own supporters as governors in all but two of the districts and allocated fiefs and benefices in lands or offices written within these districts. He was head of the standing army as well as of the district levies recruited by governors and their assistants.<sup>54</sup>

The reasons for the growth of royal power have been well analyzed by Kiwanuka and I don't intend to repeat them in detail. Briefly, they are: (a) the declining powers of the clanheads and the religious establishment that we have discussed above; (b) the territorial expansion of the kingdom that created new administrative posts which the king could easily give out to favorites who thus depended entirely on him for favors; (c) the increasing number of raids against neighboring states that brought in a number of riches such as ivory, livestock and women that the king could use to buy supporters; (d) the change in traditional economy whereby the king and not the hereditary elite controlled the distribution of land to both chiefs and peasants; and finally (e) the impact of external trade especially with the East African coast which made the Kabaka not only the richest man

in the interlacustrine area but also the chief African merchant.

Thus by the time foreign beliefs were introduced into Buganda the Kabaka was the symbol of social, political, economic and to some extent religious power. He was, in the words of Welbourn for the Baganda "the symbol of ultimate concern." He had the power of life and death over all his subjects and no one questioned it. He could, and often did, tamper with the religious establishment. He could execute the mediums like Kyabagu did or loot the gods' temples like Mutesa I did. Thus whenever the king caught a cold, the subjects sneezed. This was indeed a great social-political change whereby the king weakened all aspects of power in society that competed with him. Since religion and society are so much linked, any change in the social life of a community means a change in religious life. The Baganda's beliefs became centered on the Kabaka in the sense that he was their "ultimate concern." He had become not only a mighty king but also, a sacral monarchy. Any reversal to such a power as the monarchy had achieved would cause great psychological problems and increase the chaos, which the kings had set in motion by their successful attack on the traditional establishment, in the minds of the people. Since their religions, their clans and other aspects of their society had been weakened, largely at the hands of the kings, the people had come to place their "ultimate concern" in the king.

The coming into Buganda of foreign beliefs and later imperialism, undermined the power of the last peg upon which the Baganda had placed their social existence. The new religions they introduced showed the people that there were other forces besides the Kabaka in the following ways:

First, when Ahmad bin Ibrahim came to Buganda in the last decade of Suna I's reign, he surprised everyone when he publically told the king that there was another power, far greater and superior than the Kabaka called God (or Allah). He was the creator and sustainer of life of all creatures and that the king had no power to execute his subjects in the way he was doing.<sup>55</sup> The Baganda must have been dumbfounded for this was a reversal of their concept of power. For those who believed in what Ahmad bin Ibrahim said, it was the beginning of a psychological revolution that preceded the social revolution against the traditional way of life. For those who did not, it must have been blaspheme. But for the majority of people it must have created confusion.

Secondly, when the Muslim Arabs and Christian missionaries started their activities of looking for converts, by converting some prominent chiefs, pages, they took the loyalty of future leaders away from the monarchy to religion. As Welbourn has written "it was they (the Bakungu) who under Mutesa's son, Mwanga, were to shape the new Buganda."<sup>56</sup> The kings realizing the challenge to their authority reacted vigorously. Mutesa I burnt to death young Muslims in 1875-6

at Namugongo who had despised him by placing their faith not in the king as traditional beliefs had demanded but in a new power called God whose messenger on earth was Mohammed.<sup>57</sup>

His son, Mwanga burned in 1887, over forty Christian converts for the same offense. But the challenge and therefore weakening of royal authority could not be reversed. People were beginning to realize that there were other powers in the land. In a way it was the monarchy, which by attacking various aspects of traditional life, cleared the path for the demise of royal power. The Kabakas' successful attacks on many aspects of traditional life made people gradually realize that not only could old customs and traditions be dispensed with, if they were no longer relevant, but also, new ones could be adopted. In short, their minds became receptive to new ideas. Now they realized that besides the Kabaka, there were other powers in the land.

Thirdly, Mutesa's "changeable tafetta" about world religions, now a Muslim when Khamis was visiting him and the following day a Christian when Stanley was passing through the land and his inability to declare which religion he favored might have been of immediate political value but it gave a chance to many Baganda to think for themselves and make up their own minds. In the early days, when world religions had just come to Buganda, many subjects waited for the king to make a choice so that they would follow. But now he seemed to accept the presence of the power of these religions without making choice. A lot of people,



especially the young pages at the court, where circulation of ideas was most intense, made up their minds. Unlike the old people, they had not gone through the long acculturation into traditional life to make them drunk with "aboriginal vigor."

Fourthly, the undiplomatic manner in which Mwanga handled the affairs of the state further weakened the once almighty power of the king. The many mistakes that this youth made as king alienated him from many people. At the lake when Mwanga tried to order the converts to board the canoes (so that he might maroon them on an island), the crowd had the guts to shout and boo him. This had not happened to a Kabaka of Buganda in the past two or three generations.

Fifthly, a political revolution with great social implications occurred in 1888 when the converts to foreign religions overthrew the king, Mwanga, who had plotted to destroy them. The ordinary people who used to venerate, respect and look at the king as the supreme object in the nation ever since he had destroyed other powers that challenged his authority realized that he could in turn be overthrown by an oligarchy of people armed with foreign ideas. What were these ideas? Where was their power hidden? How could one get to the center of these new forces? What was their secret that did not only give them material superiority but also the ability to temper with the central institution of the land that had dealt heavily with the gods,

the mediums and the clan leaders? Obviously many ordinary people could not answer these questions immediately. But that foreign beliefs were taken as the cause of all this could not easily be denied. This was indeed the climax of the undermining process that weakened the traditional way of life. From then on, the uprooting of traditional way of life went so fast that it is right to call it a revolution for men turned their back on many aspects of traditional life. This uprooting of traditional way of life went on simultaneously with the adoption of foreign religions, new values and new ways of life. The Baganda concept of the universe that was changing gradually made a turn and moved very fast to a new perspective, a new look into the modern world. This was made possible because the old ways were either so much weakened as not to offer a sufficiently strong fightback or were completely destroyed.

The weakening of the social establishment, the failure of African religions to do what a religion is supposed to do, the shift in the economy of the kingdom, the coming of superior utilitarian goods in Buganda and the weakening of royal power upon which the Baganda had come to root their well being therefore undermined their concept of life and the world at large. They were now ready to receive new beliefs to fill the vacuum so created in their minds. As Ashe has written,

. . . a people who have lost their religion (or beliefs) are like those who have lost their clothing and are apt to pick up the first substitute that offers<sup>58</sup>

itself. The Baganda were such a people. They had lost faith in their traditional view of the world and longed for a new one. Two world religions came and competed for their hearts. Islam not only came first but, also initiated the psychological and socio-political revolution that opened up Buganda to foreign religions. However, Islam lost out to Christianity for reasons we shall review in the next chapter.

Having arrived thus far in our study, we can now study the various religions that came to Buganda. This work will concentrate on Islam as Christianity has thoroughly been done by various scholars. Once the ruling elite joined foreign religions in Buganda and later, Uganda, and the imperial government was established, then the weakening of ancient African way of life accelerated its pace. The appearance of an educated elite with western tastes who despised traditional ways of life speeded up the disruption and destruction of African customs. Modern institutions like schools, factories, hospitals, churches, etc. also did their job. The development of individualism especially amongst those peoples that came to live in towns and urban centers also did its work of pulling away people from their traditional attachments. It was Christianity that gained most from this chaos but as I shall show later Islam got some of the crumbs that fell from the table.

This is not to say, however, that all customs and traditions were wiped away. Some customs and traditions stubbornly refused to go and remained like stumps in a

cleared forest. What certainly did change was the state of mind; where it used to be backward looking and finding explanations from traditional life, it now shifted. Men began to look forward to a changing society. Gradually, the ancient mode of life waxed away giving room to Christianity, Islam and materialism. These two religions became the value symbols, the reference and criterion upon which men based their actions.

### CHAPTER III: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>It is not my intention to show that man needs a belief system. Experts have given the following reasons for man's desire for some kind of belief which are--man's weak analytical nature, the desire to explain the unknown, desire to endure suffering, fear, satisfaction of man's needs, etc. I found the following works particularly good:

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<sup>2</sup>Bamunoba, J. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>R. H. Barrow. The Romans, London, 1967, (Penguin) Chapter VII.

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<sup>4</sup>Low, A. D. Religion and Society in Buganda, E.A.I.S.R. No. 8 Kampala, quoting a letter from Moffart to Unwin 4th Sept. 1859 from Wallis The Matabele Mission, 1945, pp. 70-71.

<sup>5</sup>J. S. Mbiti. (1969) Ibid., p. 2.

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- <sup>7</sup>Nsimbi, Michael. Amanya, p. 124.
- <sup>8</sup>Kagwa. Empisa (1905), pp. 209-228.
- <sup>9</sup>Roscoe, J. The Baganda, p. 64.
- Taylor, J. V. The Growth of the Church in Buganda, pp. 143-7.
- <sup>10</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka (Kiwanka's Translation), pp. 47-8. This was actually a total eclipse of the sun that occurred in 1680.
- <sup>11</sup>Kagwa, A. op. cit., p. 56.
- <sup>12</sup>Kiwanka, M. S. Translation of Kagwa's King's, pp. 56-60.
- <sup>13</sup>E. M. Buligwanga. Ekitabo ky'Ekkika ky'Emmamba Kampala, 1912, p. 12.
- Kagwa, Apolo. Ekitabo ky'Ekika ky'Ensenene Mengo, p. 23.
- Musoke, D. R. "Abazira ba Kabaka Mukabya in Ebifa mu Buganda, 1916, pp. 234-6.
- <sup>14</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, pp. 120-125.
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- <sup>17</sup>Roscoe, John. The Baganda Cass Edition, 1965, p. 273.
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- <sup>19</sup>See for example:  
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- 23 Lucy Mair. *Ibid.*, (1934), pp. 241-2.
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<sup>38</sup>Rowe, John A. Revolution in Buganda 1856-1900: Part I. The Reign of Kabaka Mukabya Mutesa, 1856-1884. Ph.D. Thesis presented to the University of Wisconsin, 1967, p. 65.

<sup>39</sup>Kagwa, A. Empisa, p. 14.  
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<sup>40</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 125.

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<sup>42</sup>Katungulu, M. M. Ibid., p. 13.

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<sup>43</sup>T. Irstam. The King of the Ganda.

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<sup>44</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 73.

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<sup>47</sup>Ashe, R. Two Kings of Uganda, or Life by the Shores of Lake Victoria Nyanza, (1970 reprint), p. 317.

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- <sup>52</sup>Mackay to Wright 5th Dec., Quoted by A. D. Low.
- <sup>53</sup>Kiwanuka, M. S. (1971), pp. 96-7.
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- <sup>57</sup>Katumba, A. and Welbourn, F. "Muslim Martyrs of Uganda" in Uganda Journal, Vol. 28, 1964.
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## CHAPTER IV

### THE PENETRATION OF ISLAM IN BUGANDA FROM THE REIGN OF SUNA TO 1900

This chapter will deal with the coming and penetration of Islam into Buganda from its earliest days of introduction to the signing of the Uganda Agreement of 1900 under the following subheadings:

1. Period of Cautious Islam 1844-1852.
2. Golden Days of Islam in Buganda 1865-1875.
3. Period of Religious Scramble and Unfulfilled Expectations 1884-1900.

#### 1. Period of Cautious Islam 1844-1854

Although many sources are agreed that the Arab traders from the East African coast first came to Buganda in the reign of Suna II (1825-1852), they do not agree on the dates. Most Ganda sources like Ssekimwanyi, Ham Mukasa, Gomotoka, Katungulu and Ali Kulumba feel that the Arabs came in or after 1850.<sup>1</sup> Gray, however, after investigating many sources puts the date a little earlier. It would seem, as Oded has aptly concluded, that Arabs began to come to Buganda in the last ten years of Suna's reign (that is from 1840-1852). This is not to say, however, that there was

no influence of Arab origin in Buganda before that from the East African coast. Indeed, Kagwa reports that trade goods from the coast were in use in Buganda in the reign of Ssemakokiro (died 1794).<sup>2</sup>

The teaching of Islam to Africans in Uganda is recorded as first having taken place in or after 1844. At one of the many occasions when the Kabaka used to order a number of his subjects to execution, it happened once that there was at court, a rich Arab from the coast named Sheik Ahmed bin Ibrahim. Seeing the horror of daily executions that the Kabaka used to carry out, he decided to speak up. He stood up and told the king in front of all that no man, not even the Kabaka had a right to destroy the creatures of God in the way Suna was doing.<sup>3</sup> Suna and indeed all his subjects were surprised to hear that there was "someone else" on earth greater than the Kabaka. Ever since the Kabaka assumed the powers that made him the symbol of the kingdom in both religious and political affairs, he had become the Buganda and could do what he liked with his subjects. But now, here was a foreigner who was saying that the Kabaka's powers were challengeable. This, as we mentioned in the last chapter was the beginning of the psychological revolution that enabled many Baganda in later days to turn their faces away from their traditional beliefs to new ones. Despite his tyranny, Suna was fully of magnanimity and instead of ordering the execution of Ahmed bin Ibrahim as many Baganda courtiers might have thought, spared him and

asked who this might power, God, was. The Baganda must have been surprised for Suna had previously ordered the sewing up of Kigemuzi's (later nicknamed Wabulaenkoko) lips, a diviner who dared to contradict the king. May be the king had learned a lesson. Few could say.

From then on, the East African coastal Arabs began, cautiously, to expound to Suna the principles of Islam. It is reported that they read to Suna every day from the Koran and that before his death, he had completed four chapters of the Koran.<sup>4</sup> The exact number of Arabs who came to Buganda in Suna's reign is not know, and is not of high value to this study though to mention a few is not out of line. Kagwa says that Medi Ibrahim (Ahmed bin Ibrahim) was followed by Kyera, Amulan (probably Imran), Mina, Nakatukula Muganzijja and Zigeye Omubulusi.<sup>5</sup> Saim, a half-breed came to Buganda in 1848 and Isa bin Hussein who soon became Suna's bodyguard arrived in the same year. In 1852, Snay bin Amir el Harris visited Suna.<sup>6</sup>

The manner in which the coastal traders taught Islam to the Baganda at this time was one of caution and extreme care for two reasons. One, they knew that they were dealing with a strong authority that could annihilate them if they vexed him. Burton wrote that when Snay bin Amir visited Suna, he behaved humbly:

The Arab thought proper to assume a posture of homage; namely to sit upon his shins, bending his back, and with eyes fixed on the ground--he had been cautioned against staring at the "God of earth"--to rest his hands upon his lap.<sup>7</sup>

Muslim sources confirm that although Suna received instructions in Islam, he never embraced it. Secondly, the Arabs were not sure whether the population would receive their message or not. Their main aim was to trade and they taught Islam mainly for creating friendly relations with their partners--especially strong ones.

Islamic influence was reduced in the years 1852-1865 due to the small numbers or in some cases, the virtual absence of coastal Arab traders in Buganda. As Oded has pointed out, the reasons for the absence of Arabs in Buganda at this time still lie in mystery. Many writers tend to take the view, first recorded by Speke, that the Baganda banned the Arabs from coming.<sup>8</sup> The validity of this assertion is very doubtful. For one thing, it is not clear in whose reign the expulsion occurred. For another, there is doubt as to whether it was the chiefs or the king who gave the order. Moreover, the Ganda sources do not mention the expulsion order. On the other hand, it is clear that one Arab station in Buddu was destroyed by Rumanika on the order of the Kabaka.<sup>9</sup> The Baganda were motivated by a desire to stop the coastal traders dealing directly with Bunyoro. But this was an isolated incident which though it might have frightened the Arabs could not have formulated Baganda policy towards the Arab traders in general. A better explanation is that the Arabs were finding it extremely difficult and unprofitable to come to Buganda. African chiefs in central Tanganyika through whose territories the Arabs

had to pass were demanding heavy dues. It was around this time that Manua Sera successfully blocked the coastal road to the Arabs except those who accepted his conditions.<sup>10</sup>

The result was that very few Arab and Swahili traders ever reached Buganda in this period. Speke does not mention the presence of Arabs in Buganda as Stanley did later on. The consequences of Arab absence in Buganda was, among a number of others, a decline of Islamic influence.

True, Islam did not pick up many converts in the reign of Suna II. But it attained two important achievements. One, it opened the eyes of the Baganda to the presence of foreign ideas that might surpass their own. Two, by claiming that there was someone else greater than the Kabaka, Islamic ideas initiated a psychological revolution that made it possible for the Ganda mind to listen and later accept foreign beliefs. It was a challenge to the Kabaka as the symbol of ultimate concern for Ganda religion.

## 2. The Golden Age of Islam in Buganda 1865-1875: The Reign of Mukabya Mutesa

In this period of the reign of Mukabya Mutesa I, Islam reached its highest peak in the country. The ruler of the kingdom made it a state religion and issued decrees requiring all his subjects to observe Islamic law. The main general cause for the Baganda's adaption of foreign beliefs has been discussed in the last chapter. Here, we shall confine ourselves to the various individual factors that made the Kabaka of Buganda and his people adopt Islam.

Simultaneously, I shall try to show how, by requiring its adherents to drop many of their traditional customs and behavior, Islam prepared and in some cases initiated a revolution in Buganda.

(a) Factors Favoring the Adaption of Islam in Mutesa's Reign

Islam seemed to have offered an explanation to Mutesa philosophical curiosity about the destiny of the soul after death than that of the traditional beliefs. The Muslim Arabs helped the king with a better means of communicating state intelligence, acted as his secretaries, as his mercenaries in his wars and helped him in various other ways that made them and their creed popular in Buganda. It is also possible that Mutesa toyed with Islam for political motives. These were centered on his desire to remain the most powerful man in the interlacustrine area through the maintenance of his independence, the control of trade especially in firearms and freedom to raid his neighbors as he wished. Further, the Arab Muslims provided better healing methods than the local doctors, introduced material goods superior to the local products, helped Baganda to improve the quantity of their agriculture and set the dress fashion of the kingdom when they introduced cotton cloth.

Mutesa's curiosity about the destiny of the soul after death must have attracted him to Islam. As we have indicated, there was an almost virtual absence of Islamic influence from 1852 to about 1863. This vacuum was filled

by the coming in that year of an influential Arab locally known as Ali Nakatukula. He had visited Buganda in the reign of Suna and some courtiers knew him. Mutesa, learning that Suna, his father, had been taught about strange belief began to inquire about what it was that his father had learned.

We used to tell him, Ali replied, about God, the King of kings and that he would raise people from the dead. Aren't you lying? Mutesa asked, is there such a thing as resurrection?<sup>11</sup>

The Arab replied that there was a rising from the dead and that the creator of all made this possible. Mutesa was so amazed about resurrection that he began to listen to the Muslim Arabs seriously. As we noted earlier Mutesa was very sceptical of the traditional explanation of the cosmos and the destiny of the soul. The Islamic interpretation seemed to quench his curiosity. As a show of confidence in his newly acquired belief in the resurrection, Mutesa revolted against the traditional burial customs of the kings of Buganda. He gave an order stopping the separation of the king's jawbone from its skull for decoration and enshrinement in a temple for adoration by his subjects as was the usual custom before him. He told his chiefs that he should be buried whole with his skull unmolested.<sup>12</sup> He even went on to order that all bones of his ancestors should be exhumed and reburied together with their jawbones.<sup>13</sup> Mutesa, it would seem wanted to ensure that the body should be buried unmolested so that on the day of



resurrection, it would rise as a whole person. Thus Islam in this particular case made the Baganda completely break with the past and take on a new course.

Mutesa was so amazed by his new found knowledge of the resurrection of the dead and the oneness of God that he decided to send a missionary party to his "brother" Kabarega, King of Bunyoro to tell him about the new faith. He sent him the following presents with a hope that Kaberga would become a Muslim; a mat for praying on, a kettle to carry water for abductions before prayers, a red flag to be hoisted by the mosque and sandals that are easily removed before entering a mosque saying:

I have sent to you two teachers whose names are, Sabaddu, the Mujasi and Mwanga the Sabakaki to teach you the good words of God (Allah) who is mightier than all gods, who is the ruler of earth and heaven. Moreover, there will be a final day of judgment when all the dead will rise and be judged. I wouldn't like you, my brother, to be on the wrong side.

But Kaberega sent the missionaries back and requested them to return the presents to their owner saying:

Go back to my brother who sent you . . . tell him I have my traditional gods who protect me. Tell him I am not afraid of the fire that will burn the condemned for it will burn my bones after my death in which case I will not feel it. I have heard that people will rise from the dead and become as alive as they had been before. Why should the Kabaka of Buganda be happy about such a thing? Does he think anyway, that its true? Suppose his father Suna rose from the dead, will he still be King of Buganda? Won't Suna kill him? Doesn't he realize that if all the kings before him rose from the dead, he will automatically become a common man? Won't all the princes he murdered plot against him? He will have lots of problems. I pity my brother for rejoicing over something that will eventually destroy him. As for me, I don't want to become a common man when my father Kamurasi rises from the dead.<sup>14</sup>

When the party returned to Buganda, Mutesa was sad to hear the news that "his brother" would not joy over the resurrection but told his chiefs that they should be steadfast in Islam.

The coastal traders provided Mutesa I with a better method of communicating and transmitting state intelligence, secrets and messages by their introduction of writing than the traditional society offered. Before Arabs came to Buganda, the natives had no means of either writing official and personal messages on paper or of preserving their culture and thoughts other than the oral methods. There were, of course, a number of ways of doing so for example the use of the reigns of each king (Mirembe), the use of sticks (on a rope) by a messenger to remind him the number of items he had to transmit orally, but all these could not cope with the growing sophistication of Buganda bureaucracy.<sup>15</sup> The Arabs acted as clerks and secretaries to Mutesa I and also taught many Baganda the art of writing. Thus Baker pointed out that Mutesa kept clerks who could communicate by letters in Arabic.<sup>16</sup> Masoud Resalmin ben ~~Suleiman~~ wrote a number of letters for the Kabaka. As these Muslims knew Swahili, they acted as messengers and emissaries for example Ibrahim, Johar, Idi and Ramadhan.

Muslim influence must have been increased by the Arabs' helping Mutesa in the many wars and raiding expeditions he organized against his unfortunate neighbors. Moreover the Arabs brought firearms which gave the Baganda not

only victory over their enemies but also strengthened the central government. I must add that firearms could only be effective if properly used. For example, although the Baganda used them in 1875, they failed to overcome the Bavuma Islanders. Most of them were guns but a few were cannons. The first cannon was brought by Khamis who we mentioned earlier and was given the name "Kkomola."<sup>17</sup> Many Arabs participated in Mutesa's wars either as commanders or as soldiers of fortune who happened to be in Buganda when an expedition was being organized. Thus Choli (or Tori) who I mentioned earlier was appointed not only as the chief Munyenya but also to lead expeditions in Toro and Busoga.<sup>18</sup> In the Toro expedition, Choli was asked to restore Namuyonjo, the ruler of Toro whom Kaberega had ousted. Although Namuyonjo soon died of smallpox, Choli refused to listen to Baganda chiefs' appeals to return till he had collected more booty from the country.<sup>19</sup> This expedition, is supposed to have taken place in 1872.<sup>20</sup> Mutesa appointed Idi the Omuteregga as a commander of a military expedition to Bunyoro after the latter together with Masudi had apparently averted an eclipse of the sun by reading the Koran.<sup>21</sup> Idi was promoted to the Ssabagaboship of Ssinga. Masudi, who was later executed by Christian armies was made, at first, head of Ekitongole Ekikeera and later Ekiteregga.<sup>22</sup> His real name was Masudi ibn Suleiman. Songura, a Swahili served in Mutesa's fleet of canoes and commanded one unit. He was a native of Zanzibar and spent many years in Buganda.<sup>23</sup>

Thus by participating in Mutesa's wars, and by providing new military methods such as the use of firearms, the Arabs became favorites at the court of the king in this period.

Of Idi, Gomotoka says that:

Although Idi was foreigner, he led the Baganda army in two military campaigns. Because of his obedience to the king's order, the king made him rich. . . .<sup>24</sup>

As we have already noted in the last chapter, the Arabs introduced healing methods that were, at that time, superior to those of the local doctors. The people of Buganda attached great importance to healing and preventing calamities. Thus so it was believed, they helped Mutesa avert an eclipse of the sun at one occasion.<sup>25</sup> When he was very sick, in fact on his deathbed, as we have noted, he called for two Arab medicinemen to attend to him.

The Arabs also introduced skills and crafts for daily use that were very appreciated at this time and thus might have had an influence on Baganda's attitude towards Islam in this period. Choli (or Tori) whom we shall meet later showed the Baganda how to mend guns and the art of ironmongery. The Arabs also taught the Baganda how to make soap by

boiling down the fat of animals, burning the peelings of plantains and mixing the fine ashes with the boiling fat. This fat was allowed to cool, and was then made into balls of the size of cricket balls; it was commonly used for washing cotton goods.<sup>26</sup>

It was also in this period that the Arabs introduced and taught the Baganda the art of mat-making from the fronds of wild plam leaves that grew locally. The familiar, square

house that is so prominent in any Ganda village (locally called Mwamba) which is more healthy because more ventilated than the traditional thatched huts, was introduced into Buganda by Arabs in this period. The king and the chiefs soon adopted this style of building and it spread all over the country.<sup>27</sup> The influence which craftsmen had over Buganda, or can have on any other rural society, is illustrated by the life of Mackay, the Protestant Missionary. It is however, not my intention to discuss him here as his biographies have been thoroughly done by better authorities.<sup>28</sup> Because of these skills, Muslim traders became more and more admired by the Baganda.

Whenever the Arabs went into the interior, they tried to live as comfortably as possible by building good houses and growing as much variety of foods as possible. This was the case with the Arabs of Unyanyembe and Kafuro in what is now Tanzania.<sup>29</sup> It is thought that the Arabs introduced into Buganda such food stuffs as rice, tomatoes, sugar cane, papaya, pomegranates etc. that they grew in their gardens, though Emin found that some of these did not do very well.<sup>30</sup> However, many of these crops eventually spread to all the country.

As the Arabs brought cotton cloth for sale, they set the fashion of the day. At the beginning of Mutesa's reign, cotton cloths were rare enough to make the Kabaka order the execution of a chief who had hidden a piece of cloth from the king. But by the time Stanley passed through

Buganda Arab costume was the dress of the court. Many photographs of the court and indeed the descriptions of the dress of the prominent men depict a replica of an Arab court, only with black faces.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the king instructed his chiefs on what clothes to and how to wear them according to their rank.<sup>32</sup> In this way, Arab influence in the fashion of dress tightened its grip on Kiganda society. Kanzu (a long sleeved shirt that runs down to the ankles) formerly a dress of the Arabs has become the national dress of men all over Uganda.

All the above factors we have been discussing helped Islam to penetrate Ganda society in that period. No doubt they made Mutesa lean towards Islam as we have observed. But Mutesa had a subtle if not a sophisticated ability of judgment. To him, like any other politician the maintenance and increase of his power were of paramount importance. He might have seen in Islam a political tool he would use to his advantage. It is thus possible that one of the major reasons that influenced him as ruler of Buganda in receiving Islam favorably and thus transmit it to his people who later spread it all over Uganda, was the state of affairs prevailing in this part of Africa in the nineteenth century. The numerous African tribal states in the interlacustrine area were jealous of one another and in most cases fighting one another, not only for robbery and plunder but also for supremacy in the area. For example Buganda's resurgency was inflicting heavy encroachments on the territorial

integrity of Bunyoro. On the East Coast, Zanzibar was claiming, however vaguely, territorial recognition as master of the East African hinterland while Egypt under Khedive Ismael was also gradually moving up the Nile and claiming the same area of the East African great lakes.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Buganda had taken the place of Bunyoro-Kitara as the most powerful political and military state in the interlacustrine area. She had expanded her borders westwards at the expense of Bunyoro. This gave her enormous resources and manpower to maintain a big and strong military--political establishment. Her capture of Buddu during the reign of Junju and her successful bid in creating spheres of influence in Kooki and later in Karagwe gave her control of the trade routes to the Eastern African coast. This meant that Buganda and not Bunyoro would tap the trade in arms, strategic goods and other essentials. But the Baganda had not forgotten the mighty days of Bunyoro. The Kabakas' were always on guard to use all means possible to prevent the tables of mastery in the interlacustrine area turning against them. When the Arab traders came with trade articles such as arms, cloths and beads which they gave in turn for ivory and other tropical goods, the Kabaka of Buganda did all he could to control this trade. It is reported that Mutesa I tried all he could to ensure that all these advantages were in his hands.<sup>33</sup> It is thus thought that Mutesa adopted Islam partly to please the Sultan of Zanzibar and the Arabs

who would help him in case of an attack either from another African state or from "the Egyptians." Moreover, the Arabs who came to Buganda impressed it upon him that the Sultan of Zanzibar was a very strong leader. In turn, the sultan wanting to keep his influence in the interior often sent presents to African rulers to impress them. Said Majid sent an embassy to Mutesa I in 1869.<sup>34</sup> In return the Kabaka also sent an embassy of goodwill to the sultan under Sengiri Omutebi in which a live elephant was one of the presents sent to the sultan.<sup>35</sup> It arrived in Zanzibar probably around 1870. A friendship based on common interest in trade thus grew between the sultan and the Kabaka. Mutesa wanted firearms and other goods which the sultan's subjects brought. He also wanted to remain the strongest ruler in the inter-lacustrine area. The sultan wanted not only trade but international recognition as sovereign of the interior of East Africa. If he could cultivate a working friendly relationship with the Kabaka, then all was fine.

The Egyptian thrust in the lake region was probably one of the greatest diplomatic factors that made Mutesa's attitude towards the coastal Arabs and Islam more favorable than he should have done under normal circumstances. The Khedive of Egypt in the late 1870's was trying to lay claim to the areas of the upper Nile which included a large section of the interlacustrine area. From 1872, two European officials, Sir Samuel Baker and Gordon administered the Province of "Equatoria" on behalf of the Khedive. These



events alarmed Mutesa very much for if Baker's firarmed forty thieves could destroy Kabarega's palace in a day, his might be the next. Mutesa dealt with the situation very diplomatically. He sent envoys to the Khedive's agents for negotiations but I shall not go into their details. He confessed that he was a very good Muslim--though in a separate letter to Gordon he said he was a good Christian. To the Arabs from the coast who, fearing competition from traders from the North blocking the advance of the former, he diplomatically said that he was a very good Muslim. There is a strong possibility therefore, that Mutesa's wooing of Islam was motivated partly, among a number of other factors, by political considerations. By becoming a Muslim, he would please the sultan who might defend him in case of an attack by either the Khedive's forces or by another unfriendly country. He would also be on good terms with the Arab traders who brought firearms and other trade goods to the interior.

(b) The Impact of Islam on Ganda Society 1862-1875

All the above factors helped in the immediate adoption of Islam in Buganda at the period. Now I shall proceed to review the spheres in which Islamic influence manifested itself. The spheres in which Islamic influence and impact showed itself were the reading of the Koran, circumcision of the readers, the building of mosques in Buganda, prayers, the fasting of Ramadhan, introduction of Muslim

burial ceremonies, greetings according to the Arab fashion, slaughter of animals according to Islamic law, prohibition of drinking of alcoholic spirits, the forsaking of keeping dogs and the use of force to convert pagans to the Muslim faith.

As we have already noted, the teaching of Islam by Arabs from the coast to Buganda began at the court of the Kabaka. The first teacher to instruct Mutesa was, as we have said, Ali Nakatukula. In course of time, many coastal traders came to Buganda and they began to teach the Baganda. The Kabaka, Mutesa, seems to have been the first student to learn about Islam. He learned the Koran and mastered the Arabic language in a short period of time. He did so well that his teachers said in surprise;

Our lord, you have amazed us in your understanding of Islam<sup>36</sup>

So pleased was he about his new religion that he called his chiefs and told them that:

there is one God, who is the Greatest, the omnipotent, "Hakibalu," (i.e. Al-Akbar, the greatest) who is mightier than all gods. I would like you all to study this religion.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore he started explaining and teaching them the wisdom of the Quran. The chiefs with one voice of agreement replied that:

you Sir, are more intelligent in understanding those difficult things. If you like and accept them, so do we; let us become Muslims, since you are there to pin point to us where truth about God is

Thus many chiefs began to read the religion of the prophet

in Buganda. The Kabaka who "was the keenest of all and an expert on reading the Koran" was very pleased about the turn of events. The Arabs and Swahilis who taught him became his intimate friends. They came into the palace to visit when they felt so and "whenever they came, the Koran and religion were the main topics of the conversation."<sup>38</sup>

It is probable, however, that Mutesa's enthusiasm in reading might not have arisen out of purely religious considerations. As Kiwanuka has written, Mutesa was an extremely intelligent man. His enthusiasm about Islam might have arisen partly out of academic and intellectual excitement and partly from other causes already analyzed that might have had nothing to do with religion.

Among the first people to "read" Islam was Katikiro Mukasa followed by chiefs and pages that lived in and around the court which was, at the time of Ali Nakatukula's coming, at Banda. Some of the chiefs were Musisi the Ssabakaki (main gate-keeper), Basudde the Ssabawali of the Ekigalagala, Kyankonyi the Omuwanika, Mukasa the Kauta, Mujabi Omutabuza, Tebukozza, Sembuzi, Wakibi and many others.<sup>39</sup> "Reading," that is, the study of Islam, increased when Khamis the rich Arab merchant, came to Buganda. By this time, the Kabaka's palace was at Nakawa. Muslim sources claim that Nuhu Mbogo, Mutesa's brother who became leader of Muslims began to "read" Islam at this time.<sup>40</sup>

But the reading of Islam which was conducted in Arabic was very hard for most of the chiefs who were often

very old men. One of the chiefs, Mandwambi, the Ssaza (or county) chief of Kyagwe who could not pronounce or learn by heart the first phrase of the "Opening" of the Quran i.e.;

"Bismillahi arrahman Rulhim Alhamd lillahi Rabbi--al--almina"

devised a system whereby he named his wives that he thought was the equivalent of the above in the order:

"Simidaayi; Lwakimaani; Lwakiimi; Kamudulira, Labbiraamina." 41

He made sure that his wives were around the palace whenever he wanted to meet the Kabaka. Thus whenever he forgot the verses, he would ask each of the wives in order of what her new name was and this would remind him therefore saving him from the fury of the king. Thus though reading Arabic was an uphill operation, many prominent and lesser people listened to the teaching of the Arabs and Swahilis.

It was from this first group of readers that the first people to be circumcised in Buganda came. Strictly speaking, as we noted in a footnote in Chapter II, circumcision is not obligatory to Islam. It is not mentioned in the Quran and many doctors of Muslim theology do not mention it at all. However, there are differences of opinions amongst the Madhab (Schools of Law) in Islam. The Shaffii School of Law, which has a lot of followers on the East African coast considers circumcision obligatory. But the Maliki School of Law considers it fashionable and recommendable. However, many uneducated Muslims have come to take

it as the criterion of Islam. It would seem that the Muscat Arabs and those from Hadramaut who preached Islam on the East African coast were Sunnis of the Shaffii School of Law.<sup>42</sup> Thus many Swahilis and half-casts who came into Buganda were of this Madhab. Since their knowledge of Islam was elementary, their emphasis on circumcision can be understood.

In Buganda at this time, the Kabaka who was a keen reader of the Koran hesitated in offering himself for circumcision for a number of reasons. One, there was a horror of mutilation amongst the Baganda that we mentioned earlier.<sup>43</sup> And, two, there was a custom that the Kabaka as a symbol of the kingdom should not shed blood.<sup>44</sup> Since he was the Buganda itself, he had to be whole if the healthy of the kingdom was to be perfect. Mutesa, it is reported, might have agreed to being circumcised but his chiefs and Queen Mother advised him not to do so.<sup>45</sup> Despite this handicap, Mutesa considered himself a true son of Islam and even Christian writers affirm that he was a devout believer until he became disillusioned later on.<sup>46</sup> The coastal Arabs were reluctant to force circumcision on him for fear of prejudicing their trade interests. As a result of his avoidance of the rite, the vast majority of chiefs refused circumcision.

However, a few pages, prominent people and commoners agreed to carry out the physically painful rite. Nearly all Muslim sources are agreed that the first Muslim to get circumcised was Masanganzira. Sheik Nsambu in several

interviews with Noel King, Arye Oded and myself has pointed out that Masanganzira was circumcised as a test case on the command of the Kabaka to find out whether the rite killed people. Although he did not die, it seems Mutesa did not follow up the experiment. Sheik Haji Abdallah Ssekimwanyi in his two pamphlets gives the following people who he thinks were the first Baganda to get circumcised.<sup>47</sup>

LIST OF FIRST CIRCUMCISED BAGANDA MUSLIMS  
COPIES FROM SSEKIMWANYI'S EBIMU & EBYAFAYO

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Masanganzira   | 8. Mustafa Makonge                    |
| 2. Matembe Bulega, son of Mukwenda Nduga  | 9. Buzinde                            |
| 3. Kalule, son of Mayanja   | 10. Adimani Kiwanuka                  |
| 4. Naise, servant of Katikiro Mayanja   | 11. Bukulu, son of Subi               |
| 5. Amulane Tuzinde  | 12. Sudi Jita (Gira)                  |
| 6. Musa Butamedi  | 13. Ssebata                           |
| 7. Yusufu Ssebakiwa   | 14. Abdulaziz Maleku                  |
| 16. Bamutalira  | 15. Bbira, brother of Katikiro Mukasa |
| 17. Kigwaana  | 22. Muwanga                           |
| 18. Juma Matembe, the son of Nkata; this one learned more than all his colleagues | 23. Bwetugunywa                       |
|   | 24. Ssekitoleko                       |
|   | 25. Ssekigudde                        |
| 19. Abdala Kadiri Kyayambaddie (or Kyanyanja)                                     | 26. Nakwanira                         |
|   | 27. Magirembe                         |
| 20. Musoke Mynyezi  | 28. Kagwa Mayengo                     |
| 21. Nakuboga  | 29. Mponye Buwonyi                    |
|   | 30. Kaganyulo                         |

Ssekimwanyi adds that all these people were circumcised before the battle of Nakalanga that is before 1875, the year Mutesa ordered the death of the pagans as we shall see later. It is true to say therefore, that although the Kabaka refused circumcision for himself, the rite was taken up by some Muslims. As we shall discover later many unsophisticated Muslims among the masses in the country have come to take it as the criterion of Islam.

The strictness with which the Kabaka and his chief kept the Islamic prayers is another instance of the impact of Islam at this time. It is reported that crowds used to follow Mutesa to the mosque punctually each Friday especially when he was at Nabulagala.<sup>48</sup> He strictly ordered his people to be punctual for prayers.<sup>49</sup> He appointed pages to see to it that water for ablutions (cleaning) before prayers was always punctually brought. Apolo Kagwa was one of them.<sup>50</sup> Mutesa also decreed that stones for scrubbing feet in the process of cleaning before prayers be erected in courtyards of every household. Later these stones became the sign of a Muslim home that faithfully prayed. Houses that did not have them were declared pagan and when the hunt for pagans was initiated people without these stones suffered.<sup>51</sup> It did not mean, as Kagwa and Mukasa have rightly pointed out, that all who professed to be Muslims by exhibiting these supposedly Islamic signs were true believers. Some did so out of fear. But that these signs indicated Muslim influence of some sort cannot be refuted.

The building of mosques both in the palace and countryside during this period also reflected the influence and impact of Islam in Buganda. The Kabaka not only built a mosque in the palace but also created a department (Ekitongole) to manage the affairs of the mosque.<sup>52</sup> One of the first persons to act as the head of the Ekitongole Ekizikiti was Edward Mukasa who later converted to Christianity. Apolo Kagwa and Yona Waswa worked at the mosque too. Subjects were required to bring food, cattle and other gifts to the staff of the mosque administration. As the Kabaka moved his palace now and then, a new mosque was constructed on each new location. Bellefonds tried to construct and started to build a red brick mosque for Mutesa but failed to complete it as he could not get suitable materials.<sup>53</sup> Wherever the Kabaka transferred his residence, by the side of a mosque, he erected a mast bearing "a red flag, having a mark of the moon and star. . . . That mark witnessed that the Mohammedan religion was believed in. . . ." <sup>54</sup> This mast and flag were given to Mutesa by an Arab called Amisi and was always erected by Mutesa's costal handy man, Choli. Each Friday, just before prayers, this flag was publically hoisted by Choli in front of the Kabaka. Later, the missionaries used the mosque at Mutesa's palace in Rubaga as a Christian place of worship and instruction.

Fasting during Ramadan, the month "in which the Koran was sent," (sawm), was also strictly observed by both



the king and his subjects in this period. The Kabaka first began to observe the fast at Nakawa in 1867.<sup>55</sup> From that date on, it is believed that he fasted for ten consecutive years. So strict did Mutesa become in observing the fast that in 1868 when he missed doing so due to being involved in a war against Busagala, he fasted later that year in another month to fill the gap as Islamic law says.<sup>56</sup> Then he gave an order that all his subjects must fast and he sent out inspectors to find out those who defaulted. One of these inspectors, Kakoloboto by name sent to Buwaya in Busiro was found eating and was reported to the king for doing what he was punishing others for. From then on, all defaulters in the fast and all hypocrites amongst Muslims in Uganda are called Kakoloboto.<sup>57</sup> Mutesa built a palace by the lake in which he would observe the fast. He gave it the appealing name of Salaama (Ar. peace).<sup>58</sup> But as the Kakoloboto affair indicates, fasting was a very hard task for many people in Buganda. Nevertheless it was one of the signs showing that Islamic influence was dominant at this time.

Slaughtering of animals according to Islamic law was another sign reflecting the influence of Islam in this period. Formerly in Buganda, an animal was killed by being brutally beaten to death especially on its head.<sup>59</sup> It was not a very efficient way of doing the job for not only did the animal take a longer time to die--which increased the pain the poor beast had to endure--but also strong animals

like bulls fought back and injured humans. But when the Arabs came, they taught Mutesa to slaughter according to Muslim law and insisted that only circumcised Muslims could do the job.<sup>60</sup> Choli (or Tori) became Mutesa's official butcher and cook.<sup>61</sup> Mutesa appointed supervisors to see to it that his wives ate meat slaughtered according to the new fashion; a fashion that was complete revolt from the old one. Two Muslim women named Nalebe and Bamugwanire were appointed to the above job.<sup>62</sup> To this day Muslims in Uganda do not eat meat slaughtered by non-Muslims.<sup>63</sup> As we noted earlier, the Baganda were very fond of hunting, especially with dogs. Suna was very fond of his dogs and Mutesa had herds of hunting dogs.<sup>64</sup> However, influence of Islam made Mutesa abolish the custom of hunting with dogs.<sup>65</sup> This shows how far Mutesa had gone out to observe the tenets of the new religion for Islam, to some extent, allows the keeping of hunting dogs.<sup>66</sup>

Mutesa also adopted the coastal Arab way of greetings. This happened especially after Khamis had visited him. This greeting was as follows:

Greeting: Aslaam alaikum  
Reply: Wa alaikum salaam

After learning how to greet in the above fashion, he called his chiefs and instructed them on how to do the same. But while at Nakawa, he discovered that they had not learned the Arabic way of greeting, for they said it as follows:

Greeting: Salamaleko  
Reply: Yee Salamaleko dekimu salaamu;

He was sad about it but realized their slowness in learning.

In observing the Sharia, the Kabaka seems to have given up, at least temporarily, the drinking of alcohol and wines. Stanley wrote that Mutesa once boasted that "no man could say since that day that he had seen Mutesa drink."<sup>67</sup> It is not however, clear that he enforced this requirement on to his subjects.

The real peak of Islamic influence in Mutesa's reign in Buganda came in 1875 when he was observing his ninth Ramadhan. In that year, by decreeing that all his subjects must embrace Islam, he was not only making it the religion of the state but also he was using his prerogative, his right as the head of the religion of the country to tell people what religion they should follow. His position as the symbol of the kingdom made it possible for him to do as he did. He gave orders that the three Islamic rituals; prayers, fasting and eating lawful meat had to be strictly observed. Whoever broke them was to be convicted of a criminal offense and might face the death penalty.<sup>68</sup> He gave another order, which seems cruel to us now but then was probably judged according to the standards of the day, that all non-Muslims or Bakfiri (Ar. Kāfirūn) must be rounded up and put to death. Many unfortunate people perished.<sup>69</sup> Many of those who were massacred, as in any other such insane action, were innocent people who were on bad terms with the authorities. Thus for fear of the Kabaka as Mukasa and Duta have written, even those who were not convinced

about Islam embraced it. Although the prophet clearly stated it that there is no compulsion in Islam and that the last aspect of the jihad (i.e. the taking up of the sword; others being purification of one's heart, to do good and to forbid the doing of evil should only be embarked on in self defense), many Muslim leaders have ruined the name of Islam by enforcing it on their subjects. As far as Buganda was concerned, Islamic influence had reached its peak. From the days when Snay bin Amir used to teach it cautiously; it had now become not only the fashion of the day but the criterion upon which the law of the land was based. This was not to last for very long.

(c) Decline of Islamic Influence 1875-1844

From 1875 onward, the fortunes of Islam and its influence in Buganda began to subside and slip downhill. Four factors contributed greatly to this reduction of Muslim influence from 1875 to the death of Mutesa in 1844. The first was the coming to Buganda of the traveler H. M. Stanley, the second was the Egyptian thrust in the lake region, the third was the massacre of Muslims by Mutesa and finally the coming to Buganda of Christian missionaries coupled with Mutesa's inability to join any of the three world religions.

In late 1875, Stanley passed through Buganda and made a great impression on Mutesa for unlike other European visitors, he was reckless enough to use his guns in aid of Mutesa in his aggressive war policy in a battle against

Buvuma. This action "endeared him to the king and the two increased in each other's confidence."<sup>70</sup> Moreover, Stanley made the impression that he was representing a powerful European state which could help Mutesa in case of an invasion. This came in an opportune moment for Mutesa was at this time worried about the Egyptian imperial thrust up the Nile. Likewise, Stanley was very much impressed by Mutesa; saying that "if aided timely by virtuous philanthropists, he would do more for central Africa and civilization than what fifty years of Gospel teaching unaided by such authority could not."<sup>71</sup> Mutesa seems to have believed in the value of adopting a foreign culture, "not necessarily for cultural reasons, but because of the military, political and even material power such a culture represented."<sup>72</sup>

When therefore Stanley mentioned Christianity, Mutesa was delighted not only to escape Islam that demanded the hard rite of circumcision but also in the hope that it would be a diplomatic card in his favor. Islam suffered in the sense that it no longer could pretend in the eyes of Mutesa that it was the only world religion that preached one God. Mutesa began to take lessons from Stanley earnestly which the Muslims were obviously not happy to see.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Stanley wrote to Europe calling for Christian missionaries to come to Buganda. His appeal received immediate response from Britain for within a few days of the publication of his letter in the "Daily Telegraph" on 15th November, 1875, the Church Missionary Society received 5,000 pounds from an anonymous donor and

by the end of the month the C.M.S. committee had decided to undertake the "Uganda Mission." Thus Islam could no longer monopolize Baganda hearts.

Secondly, the Khedive of Egypt's aggressive plans in the interlacustrine area in this period alienated Mutesa from not only the ruler of Egypt and her people but also from the religion they professed. Mutesa feared that, as we have said earlier, the Egyptian would move to Buganda after they had completed their task with Bunyoro. Gordon and Baker had attacked Kabarega and an Egyptian flag had been hoisted at Masindi. Gordon had sent Nuer Aga with troops to establish a fort at Mruli. Though he was lured to Buganda in one of Mutesa's greatest diplomatic achievements, his insolence and behavior caused suspicion in Buganda. Moreover, the Zanzabari traders who tolerated Mutesa's lukewarm Islam also feared the intrusion of the Khedive into a market they had traditionally regarded as their own. They also did their best to poison Mutesa's attitude towards the Egyptians.

The result was that the Egyptian incursion into the interlacustrine area did more damage to Islam than good. Here was a Muslim ruler, Mutesa must have imagined, trying to annex Buganda and the teachers he had sent had no respect for Baganda and their ways.

The massacre of Muslim converts by Mutesa which took place in or about 1876 also greatly undermined the influential position that Islam had occupied in Buganda for the previous ten years. Many reasons for the massacre of

the Muslims have been given especially by Katumba and Welbourn.<sup>74</sup> Stanley's influence on Mutesa is often quoted by Muslim authorities. It is said that Stanley warned the king that the Arabs might circumcise him by force. It is also claimed by the same authorities that it was the intrigues of the old chiefs, who fearing that if the Kabaka was circumcised, they would also have to go through the same rite, fabricated false accusations against the Muslims.<sup>75</sup> The coming of more arrogant and possibly more fanatical Muslim teachers from the North (Turks as the Baganda called them) under the Egyptian umbrella is also, often, cited.<sup>76</sup> These teachers, it is reported, were more intolerant than their coastal counterparts of failings in the requirements of Islam. It is reported that not only did they think that Mutesa was a Kafir (a non-Muslim) but also that they never concealed this belief.<sup>77</sup> The Ganda sources claim that these "Turks" ordered the Baganda to rebuild all mosques in the country since they faced westwards instead of east towards the permitted Qibla, Mecca; that all Baganda should only eat meat slaughtered according to Islamic law; and that Muslims could only be led in prayer by a circumcised person.<sup>78</sup> Mutesa could probably agree to the rebuilding of the mosques and enforce fully the eating of meat slaughtered according to Islamic law. But he found it hard to give up his position as leader (iman) of prayers in the mosque. We have noted earlier on that as a symbol of the kingdom, he was, like any other sacral monarchy, expected to take the lead in

religion. All his people expected him to do so and he probably regarded it as a natural right conferred upon him by providence. Without minimizing all the above factors that might have added to the Kabaka's anger towards the Muslim converts, I feel that the challenge to his leadership was the climax or the last straw that made him decide to massacre them. He was realizing what his son Mwanga realized too late, that these young converts were altering their loyalty from him as Kabaka, a Kabaka expected to lead his people, both politically and religiously, to Islam as a religion. They did not, like most Baganda, dispute his political leadership. But they were asserting their independence of decision in matters of religion. For the Kabaka, it was true he had become a Muslim but he had no intention of giving up his position as the "ultimate concern" of the Baganda. Mutesa acted swiftly to curb this rebellion. It was, strictly speaking, a rebellion not a revolution because it failed. But it ignited sparks of hope that were to gather momentum a decade later when the converts to foreign religions reasserted their independence of the king as far as religion was concerned. This rebellion, led by Muslims, began "the revolution" in Buganda. Many writers who claim that what occurred in Buganda later on in the 1880's was a Christian revolution tend to minimize the influence of this Muslim rebellion and their massacre on the desire of all "readers" in Buganda to free themselves from the Kabaka's religious tutelage.



For the moment then, the effect of their massacre was to reduce Islamic influence. Non-converts who had previously been persecuted now took comfort in seeing their adversaries in trouble. Assembling the names of the victims is difficult. The official list recorded by Muslim historians represent only those done to death at and around the capital. The names of those who perished in the countryside, at the order of the king, are lost to history.

Again Ssekimwanyi in both Ebyafayo and Ebimu provides the best official list of these Muslim martyrs whose names are:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| * 1. Mponyebuwonyi | * 9. Kalule     |
| 2. Mudduawulira    | 10. Kisengula   |
| * 3. Bira          | 11. Nsereko     |
| * 4. Bamutalira    | 12. Mabende     |
| * 5. Kaganyulo     | * 13. Namwanira |
| 6. Mukwanga        | * 14. Mukeka    |
| 7. Muwanga         | * 15. Mafembe   |
| 8. Bazekuketa      | * 16. Muwanga   |

N.B. Those marked with a star are also in the list of the first circumcised readers in Buganda.

Although the massacre of the Muslims neither meant the end of Islam in Buganda nor Mutesa's completely throwing it overboard, it weakened the morale of Muslims and reduced Islamic influence in the kingdom.

And finally, the coming of professional Christian missionaries brought into Buganda such an able competitor

that Islamic influence was bound to decline. As we have noted, Stanley published his famous letter calling the missionaries in 1875. On June 30th 1877 two C.M.S. protestant missionaries Lieutenant Shergold Smith and Rev. C. T. Wilson arrived in Buganda at Mutesa's court which was then at Rubaga. On 6th November, 1878, they were joined by A. M. Mackay. On February 16th 1879 three other missionaries Pearson, Litchfield and Felkin arrived at Mutesa's capital. To add to the religious confusion the Baganda had by now fallen into about monotheistic religions, Catholic missionaries of the White Fathers' order arrived in Buganda on 23rd February, 1879. They were Fathers Livinhac, Barbot, Girasoult, Lourdel and a lay brother, Amans.

The activities of the Christian missionaries and the growth of the Christian Church in Buganda have been recorded elsewhere by experts on the subject.<sup>79</sup> At first, Mutesa was more pleased by the Europeans than the Arabs. He is reported to have stated to his court:

A great many Arabs, some Turks, and four white men have visited me, and I have examined them all talk, and for wisdom and goodness the white men excel all others. The Arabs bring cloth, beads and wire to buy ivory and slaves, they also bring powder and guns; but who made all these things? I have seen nothing yet of all they have brought that the white men did not make. Therefore, I say give me the white men.<sup>80</sup>

When the missionaries did arrive, Mutesa was full of expectations. Islam had to be brushed aside for the moment. He listened genuinely to the Christian gospels and contemplated becoming a Christian especially before 1880. He

approached the Christian missionaries of both denominations to baptise him. But they told him that he must abandon polygamy. Thinking that Catholicism was easier than Protestantism, he told the White Fathers that the religion of the C.M.S. was hard. Moreover, Pere Lourdel of the White Fathers had just cured him of dysentery (about mid-1879) and he thought the C.M.S. were agents of Egypt through Gordon who was a Protestant. But the White Fathers also insisted on monogamy, and in June, 1879 he asked Lourdel to baptise him; then in September he asked Mackay of the C.M.S. but they all insisted on monogamy. Then in September, 1879 he turned to Lourdel again. So much had he become interested in Christianity that he contemplated of dismissing all his wives except one, Bwakabaka, so that he should be baptised.<sup>81</sup> Some of his chiefs, namely Tebukozza, the Kyambalango, Mayanja, chief of the Ekitongole Ekinakulya and Kaddu of the Ekisalosalalo volunteered to become Christians with their master. It seemed that Mutesa was about to become a Christian and this would have meant the complete eradication of Islam.

But the Kabaka never became a Christian for three reasons. First, the traditional establishment led by the Katikiro and the Queen Mother was very much opposed to their master's becoming completely submerged in these new cultures. Just before the king crossed the floor, Katikiro Mukasa on his knees appealed to the Kabaka that:

My lord we have heard everything you said in favor of your becoming a Christian and you are perfectly right. But my lord people can only settle where there is

peace. You know very well the rivalry between the Catholics, Muslims and Protestants. If you join any one of these religions, there will be no peace in this country. The resulting instability may well be a deliberate prelude on the part of these foreigners to annex the country.<sup>82</sup>

Mukasa's advice was taken and the Kabaka did not get baptised.

Secondly, the competition amongst the three religious groups, the Muslims, the Protestants and the Catholics as Katikiro Mukasa noted made Mutesa and indeed all Baganda hesitate to make a decision as to which religion they should join. So amused about the competition of the three groups was Mutesa that one day he compared himself to a beautiful young girl being courted by three men who must wear themselves away before she made a choice. In 1883, Mutesa complained to Mackay that each group of foreign teachers were always at one another's throat by calling one another a liar. It was difficult, he went on, for the Baganda to decide which book, the Bible as taught by the Protestants, the Bible as taught by the Catholics or the Koran, was true.

And finally the failure of the missionaries to act as military supporters of the king and giving him material things contributed to his disillusionment about them. Mutesa thought that the missionaries would not only bring a lot of goods (especially manufactured ones) to Buganda but that they would help him in his wars by providing fire-arms and developing military alliances between Buganda and their respective countries. This impression was unfortunately created by Stanley. Thus when the missionaries came to

Uganda, Mutesa thought they had come not only to teach Christianity but also to teach his people how to make powder and guns.<sup>83</sup>

The failure of the king to become a Christian did not mean that Islamic influence again became as dominant as it had been just before the coming of Stanley and the missionaries. All it meant was that Islam retained what little influence it had managed to keep. As it happened, the Kabaka tolerated these foreign religions and people were free to join whatever religion they wanted. But for him and the chiefs he gave a decree on 23rd December, 1879 that:

The Arabs can keep their religion; and you Christians can keep yours. We ourselves shall keep the religion of our forefathers.<sup>84</sup>

This decree, however, did not request the expulsion of either the Muslims or the Christians. As a matter of fact, Mutesa allowed them to stay and to teach those of his subjects as wanted to know more about foreign religions. No doubt this was good at the time as it secured freedom of worship. But the long term repercussions of such a decision were different. By failing to choose any of the religions in the kingdom, Mutesa forfeited the leadership he was supposed to give as a symbol of the kingdom. By allowing foreigners to entice his subjects into their religions, he was further corroding the monarchy's power of leadership to decide what the religion of the land should be. Henceforth, the freedom to choose what belief to follow was thrust into

the hands of the people. Mutesa was a respected man and no havoc happened in his reign as a result of this newly won freedom. His son, however, had to shoulder all these problems.

By this time however, Mutesa was a sick man. Although he did not publically declare as to which religion he favored in his last years, Muslim authorities claim that he favored Islam.<sup>85</sup> The reasons given to support this claim are (a) he read the Quran very often before he died, (b) he left a will in which he instructed his subjects to refer to the Koran for decisions instead of calling upon his spirit and (c) the two doctors who attended to him before he died were Muslims namely Abdallah Mutabib and Abdalla Sudi. Catholic authorities tend to support the Muslim point of view.<sup>86</sup> Protestant authorities are of the view that Mutesa died without making a choice; that is he died a pagan.<sup>87</sup> Personally, I feel that although Mutesa was inclined more to Islam, there is no way of proving that he died a Muslim. His will is recorded only by Muslim sources. The fact that it was the Arab Muslims who attended to Mutesa last is recorded by both Muslim and Christian sources. But a sick man has no choice but to see whichever doctor is around. As to the reading of the Koran, maybe it was a desire to satisfy his intellectual needs. The Koran was the first and probably the only book that Mutesa had read so well. Naturally, he might have wanted to reread it especially in his last years when prolonged illness must have brought a

lot of boredom to a man accustomed to a daily life of action. Whether he died a Muslim or not did not really matter. What mattered is what his subjects thought he had favored or inclined to. Since he was inclined to Islam, they thought that this was an indication for them to become Muslims. It is very hard to give statistics at this time but that Islam gained more converts than any other group is indicated by the events that took place four years later. When Mwanga came to power in 1884, the Muslims were the largest single religious group at court. As a result, they played a leading part in the revolution of 1888. This is not to say, however, that Islam regained the monopoly and prestige it had had in Buganda in the period 1862-1875.

### 3. Period of Religious Scramble and Unfulfilled Expectations, 1884-1894

Mutesa's seemingly uncommitted attitude towards the end of his life gave the three religious groups in Buganda (Anglican Protestants, Muslims and Roman Catholics) room for a scramble to catch as many souls as they could. His allowing these religions to stay in the country to carry on their work freed the people from his leadership in religion. Henceforth, they could practice a religion of their choice, not necessarily that of the Kabaka--though of course many preferred to take the Kabaka's choice. As Mutesa apparently leaned towards Islam in his last three years, the Muslims had a minor edge of advantage that gave them hopes and expectations. These expectations were heightened when Mwanga succeeded

Mutesa to power. He decided to use as his bodyguards youths whom he made heads of Ebitongole. Two out of the four most favorites of these were Muslims. He persecuted and put to death Christian converts but he left the Muslims alone. When he tried to destroy the "readers" (or converts to foreign religions), the latter overthrew him in the revolution of 1888. The Muslims took the leading part in this revolution and Kiwewa who replaced Mwanga was inclined towards Islam. When the alliance between the Christians and Muslims broke up, the latter easily expelled their adversaries and installed their man, Nuhu Kalema who promised to serve their interests more than Kiwewa. But these expectations were short lived and all their hopes were shattered and crushed to pieces by a number of circumstances. First, the Baganda's horror of mutilation of the body alienated the population of Buganda which feared that the Muslims would circumcise them by force. Second, this was the period of European cultural and political imperialism aggressively invading Africa with maxim guns whose power the Arabs whom the Muslims had allied with could not match. In Buganda this imperialism robbed from them the revolution that they had successfully effected. And finally, the Muslims lost their ablest leaders at the start of the religious wars and so they were crippled early in the struggle.

As I pointed out earlier, and as Kiwanuka has already written, Islamic teachings must have given Mutesa spiritual satisfaction especially towards the end of his life.<sup>88</sup> As



Kulumba and Katungulu point out, Mutesa read the Koran very often in his last days. The last two doctors to attend to him were Muslims. This gave the Muslims hope and expectations that theirs was the favored religion. Thus by the time Mwanga established his "Red Guards," a political elite of his own creation composed of rough youths, who like the Mamelukes of Egypt, were a law unto themselves, the Muslims were the largest group amongst them--and probably amongst other pages. Mwanga, in a desire to rid himself of the senior chiefs, created four Bitongoles in 1886-7 and put a youth in charge of each as follows:

- (i) Ekiwuliriza formerly headed by Kinyolo was expanded and given to Kiwanuka Katege, a Muslim.
- (ii) Ekijaasi (sw. "riflemen") which was well armed was given to Kapalaga, a Muslim.
- (iii) Egwanika (store) was put in charge of Apolo Kagwa, a Protestant.
- (iv) Ekiyinda was given to Henry Nyonyintono, a Roman Catholic.

Mwanga gave license to these youths to harrass and plunder old chiefs but they extended their brigandage to the whole country.<sup>89</sup> This action contributed to Mwanga's unpopularity.

When Mwanga realized that he had made a mistake by putting all his eggs in one basket, a basket of youths well armed with guns and foreign beliefs, he decided to curb it by destroying them. He decided to take the "readers" to an island where he would leave them to starve. The "readers"

heard of the plan and prepared for a confrontation. The Muslims decided to fight and asked the Christian leaders if they would join them. In deciding to fight Mwanga, the Muslims had a number of reasons. Although Mwanga had not burnt to death any Muslim when he executed the Christians, he had nevertheless not treated them too well. He had refused to allow them the monopoly of slaughter and his favorite, Kagwa Ndikumulaga had publically humiliated an important Muslim chief called Muguluma. They also feared that the fate which befell their co-religionists in Mutesa's reign when a number of them were executed might be repeated by Mwanga. Moreover, at that time, they were "the largest and militarily the most formidable group. They had amongst them several dynamic leaders."<sup>90</sup> Kapalaga, the general was a Muslim and Kiwanuka Katege who had a large following was also a Muslim. They decided to consult with the Christian readers on how and when to fight Mwanga.

The Christian converts also had a lot of grievances against Mwanga. He had persecuted them and burned a number of them at Namugongo.<sup>91</sup> They were not sure whether he would repeat it on them or not. But they hesitated to join in a revolt against Mwanga. Reverend E. C. Gordon has written of their hesitation that:

. . . it was stated that the Mohammedans Readers were ready and prepared to undertake the work (of revolting) themselves without the aid of the Christians. Some of my informants said that the Christian leaders did not wish to go so far as to dethrone Mwanga but were on a point of making their escape to Bunyoro, the only other alternative.<sup>92</sup>

The hesitation might have been caused by the missionaries' influence who did not trust the Muslims. After much negotiations the cross and the crescent decided to become bed-fellows, if only temporarily, to fight Mwanga. Moreover, they realized that they needed each other. The Muslims were strong and brave but Kagwa, a Protestant was in charge of the armory and the general stores. To cement the alliance, Nyonyintono, the leader of the Christians made a blood brotherhood pact with Muguluma, the leader of the Muslims.

When Mwanga decided to carry out his plan of marooning the converts to an island by asking them to board the canoes at Entebbe, they refused. It was a sign of rebellion that ushered in a period of violence known as the Religious Wars of Buganda that lasted for over six years.

Having decided to revolt and concluded an alliance to that effect, the "readers" decided on strategy. First and most important, they had to decide on a candidate to the throne. Although the Baganda were now challenging the Kabaka's right to choose their religion, they were still monarchical. Because of this, they had to have a prince who would take over the throne after overthrowing the incumbent. Up to this time, there is still much controversy over the person who the allies picked upon as their candidate. Christian sources claim that all parties had agreed on Kalema but that the envoy sent to smuggle him out of prison being a Muslim, brought Mutebi, the Kiwewa (i.e. the oldest born) who was known to be inclined to Islam.<sup>93</sup> If

this claim is true, then it is a further argument to my contention that the Muslims led and initiated the revolution in Uganda. By tradition, Kiwewa could never become a king. If the Muslims deliberately brought him up, then it should show how far they were prepared to revolt against traditional customs in order to have their way. But there is doubt whether the Muslims deliberately planned to smuggle Kiwewa out instead of Kalema. First of all, Muslim sources do not mention this prior arrangement as to which prince the envoy was to focus his attention. Only Katungulu agrees with the Christian sources. But Katungulu wrote not only sixty years after the incident but also after he had read Christian sources especially Kagwa. It would seem, as Kiwanuka has pointed out, that it was the excitement of the moment rather than a deliberate plan of the Muslims that made the envoy act as he did. This conclusion is based on the following reasons. First of all, Kiwewa's enclosure was nearer to the place where the rebels' army was encamped than that of any other prince. Secondly, there is little evidence to show that Kiwewa was a Muslim or had ever attended Muslim instruction before he was made a king. Moreover, Kalema's palace was very far away and in a battle this means a lot.

There were some heated debate when the rebels realized this mistake but they let the matter pass and accepted Kiwewa to be their king if they should succeed. They went to embark on their second strategy which was to

have all army divisions commanded by Kapalaga, by Apolo Kagwa and by Nyonyintono to converge on Rubaga Hill, Mwanga's palace. The old chiefs deserted Mwanga who had taken away all their power and gave it to the youths. The youths now used it to overthrow him. He was outnumbered and on 1st August 1888, he was overthrown. He fled to Kome Island and eventually to Sukuma in Tanganyika. On 10th August, Mutebi the Kiwewa was made the Kabaka.

The victors distributed the spoils amongst themselves. Nyonyintono, the Christian leader became the Prime Minister (Katikiro) and Mukasa the incumbent was deposed. Nyonyintono also became the county chief of Kyagwe, a continuation of Mukasa's style of politics. Ali Bukulu, a Muslim, became the Kimbugwe. Apolo Kagwa, reluctantly, became the Mukwenda though he still wanted to be the Muwanika. He did so on condition that his brother should be made the storekeeper. Muguluma another Muslim became the Pakino and Kapalaga also a Muslim became the Kaggo. It was clear that a fight would erupt over the exercise. The Muslims came out with the lion's share. They got more positions than any other group. Naturally, the Christians resented this. But the Muslims were not only the largest number, they had also led the planning and probably the execution of the revolt.

If by revolution we mean a sudden break with the accepted way of doing things, a sudden turn about to a new course, then the overthrow of Mwanga in 1888 has rightly been called a revolution.<sup>94</sup> It was the climax of the

weakening process that had started a century or so back to undermine the basis upon which Ganda way of life was built. Politically, the revolutionaries did not overthrow the monarchical ideal. The Buganda were and still are, attached to the Kabakaship. But the Kabaka's authoritative power that had been built up by a succession of kings was crushed. Henceforth the Kabaka became in effect a constitutional monarch. The readers snatched from the king the right to dictate to them which religion the subjects were to follow. Henceforth there was to be freedom of worship that is each person was free to join any religion in the land. A new oligarchy based not only on merit but also on the faith they professed took the power that was snatched from the Kabaka's hand. The old guard waned away gradually. The placing of the Kiwewa, the first born boy on the throne, was one of the major signs of how far the believers had gone in breaking with the past. By tradition, a Kiwewa would never become the king. To them, foreign religions, besides self interest, became the criterion of a good custom. This sudden break with the past, the revolution of 1888, ushered in a period of a desire for change amongst Ganda people that was not found amongst other African societies in this region. Henceforth, traditional ways began to gradually wither away. My adversaries might point out that traditional beliefs in Buganda did not weaken. That they were either co-opted with the new religions or they hibernated only to arise again in the 1950's and 1960's, during the reign of Sir

Edward Mutesa II. It is true that there was some revival of traditional beliefs in the last decade of Sir Edward's reign. But this revival was superficial and did not go very deep. It was caused by a number of factors centered on Baganda pride. The Baganda were proud of their glorious past and the position they played later in colonial Uganda. But as Uganda advanced in maturity, not only were the Baganda resented as sub-imperialists by other tribes but also, they were facing tough competition and squeeze by upstarts from all over Uganda. They could answer back either by facing up to the realities of the situation and compete on equal basis with all the non-Baganda or they could look back, like the Muslims in the Arab world, to a glorious past whose revival would bring back the lost prestige. A ruling Protestant elite, often educated at King's College Budo that expected them to be leaders, exploited the Baganda's frustrations and their monarchical inclinations to cling to power desperately. In order to stay in power, this elite deceived Baganda that the only way to save the kingdom was to glorify Buganda's past, to stick to her traditions and to have nothing to do with the rest of Uganda. An analysis of this "past" shows that it was not the traditional past that the Baganda were being asked to preserve but the past as created by the 1900 Agreement namely what the Lukika and the landed aristocracy of Buganda represented. Sir Edward Mutesa II, himself threatened by many new forces and unsure of himself since he was not all that popular at the start of his reign, joined hands with the

Protestant ruling elite to appeal to Baganda's emotional attachment to the monarchy. There was thus a political return to the days of old spearheaded by the Kabaka who probably preferred absolutism and the Protestant elite which was certainly oligarchic. In matters of religion, there were incidences of "return" such as the re-appearance of Kibuuka at Mutundwe. But it was a very superficial return not carried out as an end in itself but as a means to an end. After the return of the Kabaka from exile in 1955 this "return" faded away and was finally eroded when the ruling elite was crushed in 1966. If it had any ground, it would have stayed on as Baganda's desire for change has.

Another controversy about the events of 1888 lies on deciding whose revolution or more specifically who executed this revolution. It is popularly referred to as a Christian revolution. I feel that it was a Muslim revolution, as what I have so far been trying to say can show. First of all, the events of 1888 were a climax of events that were slowly gathering momentum from early days especially after the coming of Islam. It was Islam, in the time of Suna II that revealed to the Baganda the presence of another power besides the Kabaka. This began a process that changed the psychological outlook and attitude of the Baganda mind. It was Islam, especially in the days of Mutesa as I have shown above, that began the tearing and breaking up of traditional customs and way of life. This not only weakened the Baganda's confidence in many of their customs but also, and most



important, opened the door to further break with the past. The Baganda realized that change was not only possible but also that it can be done without endangering their daily existence. Secondly, it was, as I have shown, the Muslim pages rather than the Christian who led the revolt of 1888. The Christian pages at first hesitated but later joined in. This is not to say, however, that the Muslim pages executed the revolution unassisted by Christian brains and action. As we have shown, both joined hands to revolt against Mwanga. But it was the Muslims who took the leading part and who therefore took most of the spoils. As we shall see shortly, it was over the spoils of victory that the alliance was broken.

The next question to solve was what religion the new Kabaka was to "read." All major Muslim sources; Ssekimwany, Katungulu, Kulumba, Nyanzi and Nsambu are insistent that the two parties (Muslims and Christians) decided to ask Kiwewa what religion he wanted to "read." And that they sent an envoy to the king accordingly. That after one day, he sent his maternal uncle Ssendikwanawa Ssabaganzi with a sign post with Arabic inscriptions to the effect that he had decided to become a Muslim. However, as I have already indicated, Christian sources are of the view that Kiwewa was already inclined to, if not yet converted to, Islam. There is little evidence to prove either view and thus it is hard to know exactly when Kiwewa decided to become a Muslim; before or after he had become the Kabaka. When, however,

it was learned by his subjects that he had decided to become a Muslim, Islamic influence greatly increased and the hopes plus expectations of the Muslims were heightened.

(a) Breakup of the Alliance

The honeymoon between the cross and the crescent was short lived. African Christian sources especially Kagwa and Zimbe are of the opinion that the breakup was deliberately planned by the Muslims who all the while were conspiring to exclude Christians from positions of power and if possible, from Buganda. However, Muslim sources point out that it was the "Ddungu incident" that caused the breakup. Ddungu was a Christian chief who had been sent by Mwanga to Kiziba, south of the lake, to pick up merchandise which included guns, cloth, etc. When the distribution exercise took place, they reserved for him the position of Mulondo. But on coming back, he demanded that he would take nothing except the position of Kauta (i.e. head of the royal cooks).<sup>96</sup> This had been given to a Muslim. To the Muslims who detested unlawful meat (i.e. meat not butchered according to Islamic law) this position meant a lot. But Ddungu swore that either he was made the Kauta or he would fight. He had brought lots of guns which he distributed to his supporters. The sources go on to claim that a meeting to resolve the crisis was organized at the Katikiro's house. Lubanga the Mujaasi (brother of Kapalaga) represented the Muslims and Apolo Kagwa, the Christians. Scarcely had the discussions

solved the issue than Ddungu marched in with his ruffian supporters one of whom speared Lubanga to death. The meeting broke up and the dogs of war were let loose.

I would tend to think that the Ddungu incident was a pretext rather than a major cause. The alliance between the two groups was built on very shaky grounds which could give way at any time. The Christians though a minority at that time resented the Muslims getting a lion's share of the spoils. Also the Muslims as the majority resented giving away to a minority which they thought they could easily dismantle from positions of power. Moreover, they regarded the revolution as their own for Christian pages joined hesitatingly.

The war was short and decisive. The Muslims were not only in the majority at this time but they had more guns. It is thought that they had about two thousand and their opponents had half that number. Thus on 12th October, 1888 the Muslims defeated and drove the Christians out of Buganda capital. The European Christian missionaries were arrested and it was agreed after consultations that they should be expelled but not harmed--a lesson which the Christians might have learned when dealing with the Arabs whom they burnt to death after their victory. A prominent chief Abdul Aziz Bulwadda was given the duty of escorting them to the lake and to see that they securely went away.<sup>97</sup>

Back home, the Muslims were not happy in the house they had just wiped clean of their adversaries. Kiwewa

their king found, like his father Mutesa, the demands of Islam hard. He dreaded circumcision and postponed it every day which did not endear him to the Muslims--who were the real power in the country at the time. He was a man given to drinking which upset many of the Muslims. Moreover, he lacked the charisma that a ruler in such a crisis should have to wield his disintegrated masses together.

Probably to forestall the fate of Mwanga; Kiwewa decided to strike first. He laid a plot whereby he would invite Muslim chiefs to his conference hall as if to discuss an important matter after which they would circumcise him. The Muslims came as expected and he sat on his throne as usual. After a short while he excused himself by leaving and gave a warning signal to his executioners. They emerged from hiding killing Bukulu and Kapalaga. Muguluma was not killed then as he was the Katikiro who could never be executed in the palace. As they dragged him off, Muslim armed pages and soldiers saved him. The Muslims easily outmaneuvered Kiwewa and his supporters and who was captured in October, 1888. They took complete control of the capital and the country at large.

Were the events in Buganda in 1888 inspired by Pan-Islam? Were they part of a larger bid by Muslims all over the world to reassert their lost glory? If by Pan-Islam (Ittihād-i Islām) we mean the utilization of the integrating bonds of the Islamic faith as a substitute for nationalism to unite all Muslims under one leader (especially the Ottoman

Sultan at the time in question) and one strong fighting force to resist Western Imperialism, the Muslim revolution in Buganda was not inspired by Pan-Islamic ideas.<sup>98</sup> Buganda was certainly, at the time, not a wholly Muslim State, the Arabs from the East African coast were themselves commercial imperialists each trying to carve out his own little empire with no intention of giving up what he gained and there is no evidence that influences from the Middle East either from the Ottoman Sultan or any other ruler were reaching Buganda. There was therefore no direct influences reaching Uganda at this time. However, there might have been indirect connection through the Sultan of Zanzibar. It has been claimed that the Muslim revolution in Buganda was part of a general anti-European and therefore anti-imperialist campaign by Arabs operating all over East and Central Africa. It is claimed that having found out that the Europeans had come to stay, the Arabs found that their trade interests were threatened. They therefore decided to resist the European encroachments.<sup>99</sup> The Sultan of Zanzibar seems to have played the role of planner and director of the major resistance operations all over East Africa. One of the ways he did this was the use of Islam to appeal to the emotions of the faithful. In this case, he did it through the Uwaysiya branch of the Qadiriyya brotherhood which was led by Sheik Uways bin Muhammad al-Bārāwī. In Buganda, Sulaimān bin Zāhir al-Jabir who was deeply involved in the Muslim takeover of late 1888 was a member of the Qadiriyya brotherhood. It was believed,

though not proved, that he was the Sultan of Zanzibar's emissary in Buganda. Thus if any Pan-Islamic ideas ever reached Buganda, they did so through the Sultan of Zanzibar and his agents. But this is highly unlikely since the Sultan of Zanzibar was very jealous of his independence especially of the rulers of the Muslim Orient. His foreign policy was based on the maintenance of his independence and a freehand in East Africa.

(b) The Reign of Nuhu Kalema

Now in full control, the Muslims installed Prince Kalema, as king. Contrary to some sources, Kalema had not yet embraced Islam when he became king.<sup>100</sup> He became a Muslim after being enthroned, was circumcised and given the Arabic name of Nuhu before Mu'allim Kamatta on or around 12th October, 1888.<sup>101</sup> Kalema was a very tall and big man with a brown skin. He spoke with a low voice but was very strong and brave. Katungulu says that Kalema loved his men and always encouraged them on and never lost heart. Since he was circumcised and abstained from drink, he was, according to the Baganda Muslims, the only truly Muslim King that ever sat on the Buganda throne.

Unfortunately for the Muslims, their victory and achievement neither lasted a very long period nor provided the peace to enjoy the fruits of their victory. As many writers have pointed out, the reign of Kalema was one of the most disturbed periods of Buganda and indeed Uganda's history.

It is not the purpose of this study to review in details of what really happened except in so far as it affected the fortunes of Muslims and their expectations. True the Muslims had captured Buganda's throne but as we shall see later not only did the Christians come back and drive them out but the rest of the Baganda people did not embrace Islam wholeheartedly. Islam remained a religion of the capital and was alien to the masses.

When the Christians were defeated, they ran for refuge to Ankole Kingdom, where Ntare, the ruler gave them room. But they could not easily forget their mother land especially since many of them were formerly chiefs. The first strategy for them, as usual, was to try and smuggle into their own camp a prince who would raise the banner of revolt around which they would rally. They got Prince Bamweyana who almost reached the desired destination before being captured by Kalema's supporters. After this incident, Kalema wiped out almost all the members of the royal family (all Mutesa's children except Mwanga who was out of reach) by cruelly butchering, poisoning and burning them. The Christians had no alternative but to appeal to Mwanga whom they had helped despose (together with the Muslims) a year earlier. Thus they sent messages to him at Bukumi in Tanganyika where he had taken refuge. Kalema wanting to cut arms supplies to the Christians, sent an aggressive expedition against Mukontanyi, a Muziba chief who was known to be collaborating with the Christians. The Christians decided

to attack the expedition. There were heavy losses on either side. Nyonyintono the leader of the Christians and Ddungu one of their braves were killed. The Muslims lost many of their brave men like Tebukozza. The next encounter was at Dolumu in Buddu where Mwanga's forces joined those of the Christians to fight Kalema's men. But Kalema was still strong and easily defeated his enemies. Mwanga fled to Bulingugwe Island with many supporters. Muslim sources point out that the ordinary people joined Mwanga in masses because he said to them that Muslims (Abawadi) would circumcise everyone by force if they won.

At this juncture two disadvantages worked against the Muslims. One, Stokes, a former missionary turned gun runner sold lots of ammunition to the Christians. Second the Christians achieved the control of the lake and canoes by (a) capturing an Arab vessel full of arms and gunpowder which was being brought to the Muslims and (b) Seebwato, a Christian easily defeated Kalema's Gabunga ((Admiral) in more than two encounters. This crippled Kalema's supply of arms and his movement across the lakes since the easiest routes to the south where arms were obtained was the lake. Nansenyi seems to be the last unquestioned defeat that the Muslims inflicted upon the Christians.

From then on Muslim fortunes began to weaken for the Christians began on a slow but a steady advance towards Kalema's capital. At Bunkabira, the Muslims were thoroughly defeated and at the Battle of Kitebi near the Muslim



headquarters, Kalema's forces were heavily defeated. Kalema now began the run that had been Mwangi's previously. He went to Kinakulya in Singo. On 11th October, 1889 Mwangi was back in his capital from which he had been expelled a year earlier.

However, the Muslims soon regrouped and began a counter offensive, with the aid of some Bunyoro mercenaries. But by this time, they had lost most of their brave men such as Kapalaga, Muguluma, Lubanga, Tebukozza and many others. Only Abdul Aziz Bulwadda could be described as a brave man but he was no match for either Apolo Kagwa or Semei Kakungulu. At the battle of Vumba, the Muslims were routed but in the next encounter, the Muslims wounded Kagwa which almost caused a Christian rout. Wasswa who led the Christians after Kagwa's infirmity was easily tackled by Muslims who now advanced towards Mengo. Kalema built his palace or camp at Nansana less than ten miles from Mengo. Mwangi again started on another run to Bulingugwe. But two Christian braves Kintu and Kakungulu routed the Muslims at the Battle of Bulwanyi and Kalema fled to Kijungute in Bunyoro where he sought Kabarega's help. The Muslims dwindled in numbers especially since in Buganda they were being persecuted by the victorious Christians. Muslim sources claim that a hunt for Muslim heads was organized all through the country so much that a Muslim was not sure of safety even in his brother's house.<sup>102</sup> They began to organize guerrilla expeditions but these did not make much impression.

Worse for them, Western Imperialism in the form of the Imperial British East African Company arrived in Uganda. The company agents Jackson and Gedge concluded a formal agreement with the Baganda authorities in May/July, 1890. What this meant was that Buganda was under the "British sphere of influence." The Christians thus had maxim guns on their side and the Muslims were exiled, dispirited and tired of war. Their apathy increased when their Kabaka Kalema died of smallpox in April, 1890. From that time on Mbogo became the "Muslim Kabaka" i.e. becoming a heir to his nephew. The Muslims also had two other princes, Alamanzane and Ndaula who were sons of Kalema. However, the Muslims were by now tired of war and if a genuine peace had been offered them, they might have surrendered at that time.

The new company agent, Frederick Lugard made the Muslims surrender by, according to Ssekimwanyi, deceiving them that he was the sultan's agent. They had sent messages to the sultan through Siriman bin Zayd, an Arab with a letter to take to the sultan to offer them military aid. This letter fell in the hands of Lugard who sent one of his Muslim Nubian lieutenants Salim Bey to ask the Muslims to come back. Kagwa also sent an envoy, Gidion Ntanda who, according to Bakale Mukasa, deceived the Muslims that Mwanga had fled again and that since Mbogo was the only remaining prince, he should come to Buganda.<sup>103</sup> The Muslims thus agreed to come to Buganda from Nakaima's (Mubende) where the envoys found them.

When they reached Buganda, however, they were disarmed and the princes were taken into protective custody at Kampala. The rest of the Muslims were given the three comparatively small and poor counties of Busujju, Gomba, and Butambala which lay between the Protestants around the capital and the Catholics south in Buddu. This was an unfair deal and the Muslims took it grudgingly.

However, peace between the Muslims and Christians was only temporary. According to Muslims sources (Seki-mwany, Nyanzi and Bakale Mukasa) the Christians deliberately fabricated accusations against the Muslims by saying that they had refused to work for Kabaka Mwanga. They point out that the Kasujju had in fact done his traditional duty of tying a knot (omufubeeto) on the Wankaaki (main gate) of the Lubiri and the Kitunzi was still working. It would however seem to me that a number of Muslims, which did not include chiefs were indignant at their position. Early in 1893, so it seems, some of them approached their corelitionists, the Nubian soldiers to help them against the Christians. On 17th June, Macdonald, the company agent disarmed the Sudanese troops when he learned of it. Whether he acted on a rumor started by the Christians as the Muslims claim or not, we shall never clearly asses. Having disarmed the Sudanese troops, Macdonald gave license to the Christian Baganda to attack the Muslims. The Muslims were unarmed so that very many of them were simply shot as they ran for dear life. The months June-August, 1893 were spent in

chasing Muslims wherever they were and a good job was done.

Many Muslims ran away to neighboring countries never to return. They went to areas like Kiziba, Toro, Busoga, Ankole, Bunyoro, etc. and became the first Muslim preachers as we shall find out in the next chapter. Some of these included Mukwenda Bukuda, Wamala Ssekibobo, Nkonge Pokino, Abdul Kadiri Kitunzi, Lwanga Omuwanika and many other prominent Muslims in the reign of Kalema. Others like Amuli Kaddu, Mayanja Omuteesa completely disappeared from memory and were never heard of.<sup>104</sup>

For those who decided to remain in Buganda, they were given a terribly dishonorable settlement. They were to be scattered in the Christian counties where they were to be given settlements.<sup>105</sup> These settlements (or villages) were the poorest, driest and most unproductive (obwalo obwolunyu bwebatuwanga).<sup>106</sup> On the chiefship level, only one county chief in Buganda was to be a Muslim (out of twenty). Gomba was given to the Protestants and Busujju to the Catholics. This was the end of an era for Islam in Buganda. Their hope and expectations were shattered like an egg that falls from the seventh floor to a rocky ground. Islamic influence was reduced not only at the capital where Christianity dominated but also in the villages where the ordinary people abhorred circumcision. The last flicker of hope for the Muslims was extinguished after 1897. In that year, the Sudanese troops rebelled for other reasons but tried to find common cause with the Baganda Muslims.

They approached Nuhu Mbogo who was leader of Muslims and promised to make him Kabaka if he requested his supporters to fight side by side with them. Many Baganda Muslims might have welcomed the idea but Mbogo was not only aware of the desperate situation of his men but he was also living on a pension from the British government that he was happy with. The Nubians were suppressed and Islam went underground. Muslims were excluded from positions of power and prestige and became in the words of Samula-Kimuli, "hewers of wood and drawers of water." As Welbourn has pointed out, Muslims became second class Baganda for it was impossible to have any status without a Christian name in Kiganda society. The Muslims on the other hand nursed a grudge and a hatred against the rest of Baganda and the British administration which is easily noticed when talking to old Muslims in the country. But the Muslims managed not only to survive but also to increase as we saw earlier.

Up to this day, Muslims in Buganda feel that the fruits of the 1888 revolution had been snatched from them by European imperialism and given to Christians. This is an oversimplification since the African Christians put up a hard and well planned fight. However, without European guns and planning, there is no doubt that events would not have worked out as they did.

(c) Brutalities

It is a common saying in Buganda that Muslims were

were very brutal in the religions wars and that they used to grill their enemies to death on red hot hearths. No doubt this might be true and in a war situation where law belongs to the strong, lots of atrocities are bound to happen even amongst civilized peoples such as the war in Vietnam has shown us. But Christian writers, I feel, have over-emphasized Muslim brutalities without mentioning those on their part.<sup>107</sup> And since they not only wrote more than the Muslims but also appealed to a larger audience, their stories seem to be accepted as gospel truth. The few Muslim pamphlets written, partly to refute Christian versions of the wars, also indicate that the Christians had their share of brutality. The Muslim writers report that when they expelled the Christians, they did not harm the white missionaries but allowed them freely to get out of Buganda. But when the Christians expelled the Muslims (and Kalema) to Bunyoro, they massacred all the sixty-one Arabs in the country by putting them in a huge prison house at Natete and setting it on fire.<sup>108</sup> They stole all the Arabs' belongings and distributed them amongst themselves. The sources go on to claim that the Christians organized an "inquisition" to hunt for Bawadi (Muslims) to eliminate them. Brother betrayed brother and a son who was a Christian reported his father who was a Muslim. Muslims composed many songs, sayings to describe their situation. Here is one of them:

Those who believe and expect protection from clansmen are the ones whose skulls we see lying by the roadside. You can see them paraded at Kazo; I found very many at Lubyā.

Plenty of them are scattered at Kibwa; and others are found at Kungu.

I will keep running says a Muwadi, rather than take refuge with a clansman.

They will slaughter me on the run rather than in my brother's or my father's house.<sup>109</sup>

Muwadi is the nickname for a Muslim. There were therefore brutalities on either side. True one wrong does not justify or wipe out the evil of another but pointing both of them out exposes the evil nature of man rather than of Islam as the Christian sources tend to claim.

CHAPTER IV: FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Kagwa, the main source of Buganda History does not give dates. Ssekimwangi gives 1851 (in Ebyafayo p. 1), Ali Kulumba (Ebyafayo p. 1), Ham Mukasa 1855 (Simudda Nyuma I p. 14), Gomotoka 1851 (Makula IV p. 2495), Miti 1848 (History p. 125), and Katungulu 1850 (Mss p. 1). However, the studies of Gray seem to indicate an earlier date.

<sup>2</sup>Kagwa Apolo: Basekabaka p. 88, He says that cotton cloth, copper wires, cowrie shells and other goods from the coast reached Buganda in the reign of Ssemakokiro (d. before 1800).

<sup>3</sup>Gray, Sir John M. "Ahmad bin Ibrahim: The first Arab to visit Buganda" in Uganda Journal II (1947) pp. 80-97.

<sup>4</sup>Kagwa A. "How Religion Came to Uganda" contained in "Extracts from Mengo Notes" in the Uganda Journal II, No. 2, p. 110-123.

<sup>5</sup>Kagwa, A. Ekitabo Kye Bika Bya Baganda, 1949, p. 115.

<sup>6</sup>Burton, R. F. The Lake Regions of Central Africa, 1961 Cass Reprint, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup>Burton, R. F. Ibid. (1961) p. 194.

<sup>8</sup>Speke, J. H. What led to the Discovery of the Sources of the Nile, London 1864, p. 259.

Gray, J. M. "Mutesa of Buganda" in Uganda Journal I, 1934 p. 22.

A. D. Low in Oxford History of East Africa Vol. I, 1963 p. 334.

<sup>9</sup>Speke, J. H. What Led . . . p. 263.

Speke, J. H. Journal of Discovery of the Sources of the Nile, 1864 p. 258.

<sup>10</sup>Speke, J. H. Journal pp. 77-8.

Stanley, M. How I found Livingstone, 1872 p. 267.

<sup>11</sup>Kagwa, A. Ebika . . . p. 117.

Kagwa, A. "How Religion . . ." p. 35.



- <sup>12</sup>Kagwa, A. Empisa, p. 14.  
Kulumba, A. Ebyafayo, p. 3.
- <sup>13</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 125.
- <sup>14</sup>Ham Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma, Ebiro bya Mutesa, London, 1938, p. 178.  
Ham Mukasa. "Some Notes" in Uganda Journal Vol. I, 1934, p. 130.
- <sup>15</sup>Roscoe, J. The Baganda (1911) p. 37.
- <sup>16</sup>Baker, S. W. Ismailia II, London 1874, p. 93, 463.
- <sup>17</sup>Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2415.
- <sup>18</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 134.
- <sup>19</sup>Gomotoka. Makula VI pp. 2440-1.
- <sup>20</sup>Aliwali. Ssabawanuzi, in Musizi Jan. 1961, p. 15.
- <sup>21</sup>Kulumba, Ali. Ebyafayo, p. 2.  
Katungulu, M. MSS, p. 4-5.
- <sup>22</sup>Zimbe. Buganda ne Kabaka pp. 37-8.
- <sup>23</sup>Gray, Sir J. M. "Arabs on Lake Victoria" in Uganda Journal, XXII No. 1 (1958), p. 78.
- <sup>24</sup>Gomotoka. Makula VI 2433.
- <sup>25</sup>Zimbe. Buganda, pp. 37-8.  
Aliwali. "Ssabawanuzi" in Musizi Jan 1961, p. 15.
- <sup>26</sup>Roscoe, J. The Baganda (1911) p. 414.
- <sup>27</sup>Roscoe, J. Twenty-five Years in East Africa, Cambridge, 1921, pp. 132-3.
- <sup>28</sup>For example A. M. Mackay By His Sister 1890, also 1970 reprint.
- <sup>29</sup>Speke, J. H. Journal of Discovery (1864) p. 255.
- <sup>30</sup>Casti. Ten Years in Equatoria and the Return with Emin; N.Y., 1861 p. 182.
- <sup>31</sup>Stanley, H. M. Through the Dark Continent II, 1878, p. 193.  
Ham Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma, I, p. 38.  
Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2478.  
Kasirye. Obulamu bwa Stanislaus Mugwanya, London, p. 10.

- <sup>32</sup>Zimbe, B. M. Buganda, p. 26.
- <sup>33</sup>Baker, S. W. Ismailia, I, London 1874, p. 218.
- <sup>34</sup>Gray, J. M. "Sir John Kirk and Mutesa" in Uganda Journal XV No. 1, 1951.
- <sup>35</sup>Zimbe, B. M. Buganda, pp. 80-1.
- <sup>36</sup>Kagwa, A. How Religion, p. 35.  
Al-Nur, 1967. part I, p. 4.
- <sup>37</sup>Ham Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma, I, p. 14.
- <sup>38</sup>Miti, J. A Short History of Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga and Ankole, a MSS in Makevere Library (microfilm) p. 140.
- <sup>39</sup>Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 123.  
Kagwa, A. How Religion, p. 35.
- <sup>40</sup>See Al-Nur I, December 1967, p. 9.
- <sup>41</sup>Kasirye, J. Obulamu bwa Stanslaus Mugwanya, London, 1962, p. 8.
- <sup>42</sup>Trimingham, J. S. Islam in East Africa, Oxford, 1964, p. 22.
- <sup>43</sup>Roscoe, J. The Baganda (1911) p. 7.
- <sup>44</sup>Kulumba, A. Ebyafayo, p. 3.  
J. Roscoe. Ibid. (1911) p. 7-8.
- <sup>45</sup>Ssekimwanyi, A. Ebyafayo, p. 2.  
Katungulu, M. M. MSS p. 13.  
Gomotoka. Makula VI, pp. 2445-6.  
Kulumba, Ali. Ebyafayo, p. 3.
- <sup>46</sup>Gomotoka. Makula VI, pp. 2496-2500.  
Kagwa, A. Ebika, p. 118.  
Miti, J. A Short History p. 140.
- <sup>47</sup>Ssekimwanyi. Ebimu and Ebyafayo. There are minor variations between the lists from these books on the one hand and also between Ssekimwanyi and other authorities like Bakale Mukasa bin Mayanja and Sheik Ahmad Nsambu on the other. But these are negligible in a general survey like this one.
- <sup>48</sup>Zimbe. A Short History, p. 24-25.  
Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2497.

49 Ssekimwanyi. Ebimu, p. 3.  
 Ham Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma I, p. 14.  
 Bakale Mukasa bin Mayanja. Akatabo ke Ebyafayo by  
'Entalo za Kabaka Mwanga, Kiwewa ne Kalema, Kampaler 1954,  
p. I.

50 Zimbe. Buganda ne Kabaka, p. 97.

51 Kagwa, A. Ebika, p. 119.  
 Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2497.

52 Kagwa, A. Ebika, p. 119.  
 Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2506.  
 Zimbe. Buganda, p. 26.

53 Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 130.

54 Zimbe. Buganda ne Kabaka, p. 24.

55 Kagwa, A. Ebika, p. 118.  
 Kagwa, A. "How Religion" p. 35.  
 Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 130.

56 Kagwa, A. Basekabaka, p. 124.  
 Al-Nur I, p. 10.

57 Mukasa, Ham. Simudda Nyuma I, p. 15.  
 Kulumba, A. Ebyafayo, p. 3.  
 Katungulu. MSS, p. 5.

58 Zimbe. Buganda, p. 24.

59 Gomotoka. Makula I, p. 793.  
 Kagwa. Empisa, p. 120.

60 Kajane. Okusooka, p. 135.  
 Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2497.

61 Zimbe. Buganda ne Kabaka, p. 24.

62 Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2497.  
 Kajane. Okusooka, p. 135.

63 No animal flesh except fish and locusts is lawful unless slaughtered according to Islamic law. This involves drawing a knife across the throat and cutting the windpipe, the caratoid arteries and the gullet with a simultaneous saying (or offering a prayer) of the words "In the name of God, God is great" (Ar. Bismi 'Llahi, Allah Akbar).

64 Speke, J. H. Journal, p. 273.  
 Mukasa, Ham. Some Notes, p. 124.

65 Mukasa, Ham. Simudda Nyuma I, p. 15.

66 A dog (Ar. Kalb) is one of the unclean beasts in Islam. Its flesh may not be eaten and there are special regulations about dogs, e.g. dishes licked by a dog require religious cleansing before being used again, they cut off the salat if they walk in a mosque where people are praying, etc. However, the Quran allows the keeping of hunting dogs. Thus Surah V<sup>6</sup> reads:

Lawful for you are all good things and what ye have taught beasts of prey to catch, training them like dogs; ye teach them as God taught you. And mention the name of God over it.

See also: Short Encyclopaedia of Islam, Leiden and London, 1965, p. 215.

67 Stanley, H. M. Through the Dark Continent, London, 1878, II, p. 323.

68 Mukasa, Ham. Simudda Nyuma I, p. 15.

69 Zimbe, M. Buganda ne Kabaka says that "thousands and thousands of people were killed," p. 15.

Mukasa, Ham. Simudda Nyuma I, p. 16. States that about 2000 people were massacred.

70 Zimbe, M. Buganda pp. 32-7.

71 Stanley, H. M. Through the Dark Continent II, pp. 193-5.

72 Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) p. 169.

73 Zimbe, M. Buganda p. 34.

74 Katumba, A. and Welbourn, F. "Muslim martyrs of Buganda" in Uganda Journal XXVIII No. 2 (1964) pp. 151-165.

75 These were the opinions of old living Muslims that I interviewed such as Ali Kulumba, Sheik Nsamu, Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula and Asumani Wamala. Ssekimwanyii in his two pamphlets is of the same opinion.

76 Formerly, Mutesa had sent appeals to the Khedive to send religious teachers to instruct the Baganda in Islam. After a long delay, Gordon, the Khedive's agent, sent Faiqh Ibrahim to do the job. By that time, however, Mutesa was worried more about Egyptian intentions on Bunyoro than religion. When the Egyptian flag was hoisted at Masindi and when Nuer Agar's troops advanced towards Buganda, Mutesa's mind turned not only anti-Egypt but also anti-Islam.

<sup>77</sup> G. B. Hill, Colonel Gordon in Central Africa, 1874-79, London 1884, p. 185.

<sup>78</sup> Ham Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma (1938) pp. 18-19.  
Kagwa, A. and Duta. "Extracts from Mengo Notes IV" in Uganda Journal XI (1947) pp. 110-117.

Ssekimwanyi, A. Ebyafayo, pp. 1-5.

Nyanzi, A. K. Ebyafayo by 'Entalo ze Ddini mu Buganda, Katwe, pp. 6-14.

Strictly speaking, the teachers from the North were asking what really Islam demands. Let us review a few of their demands below from an Islamic point of view: (a) That all mosques have their Qiblah (direction people face esp. in prayer) changed. Islam demands that all mosques should face towards the Kabah at Mecca. A pro-Islamic tradition (Hadith) has it that originally in Mecca, the prophet worshipped while facing the Kabah but after the Hegira to Medina, he was ordered by God to change his Qiblah towards as-Sakhrah, the rock at Jerusalem, on which the temple was originally erected. The aim was to conciliate the many Jews at Medina. But that after sixteen months of his arrival in Medina, the prophet longed once more to pray facing Mecca. He prayed to God to let him change. God allowed him and ever since Muslims must face towards the Kabah at Mecca when praying. (see Hughes' Dictionary of Islam 1895, p. 480.) (b) Eating lawful meta: Sharia demands that Muslims eat meat slaughtered according to Islamic law. (c) Leader of prayers (Imam): According to a (Hadith) tradition of Abu said al-Khaduri, an Imam is present wherever a group of Muslims meet. "When there are three persons, one of them must act as an imam and the other two follow him," provided he is the most worthy, the most knowledgeable in the religious sciences and most upright before God. Unlike in Christianity, he must not be set apart with ceremony or be hereditary such as is the case with the Hindu Brahmins. Mutesa was claiming to lead prayers, not because he was the most knowledgeable (which I think he was) or upright before God, but because he was the king. The Northerners were therefore right in insisting that he should not lead them.

However, the insolent and arrogant way they behaved before the king made communication between the two parties impossible.

<sup>79</sup> J. V. Taylor. The Growth of the Church in Buganda, London (SCM Press) 1958.

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- <sup>80</sup> Stanley, H. M. Through the Dark Continent I, 1878, p. 193.
- <sup>81</sup> Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) pp. 174-179.
- <sup>82</sup> Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) p. 176.
- <sup>83</sup> Mackay of Uganda by His sister (1890) p. 164.
- <sup>84</sup> Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) p. 189.
- <sup>85</sup> Kulumba, A. Ebyafayo 5-6.  
Sekimwanyi. Ebyafayo p. 3.
- <sup>86</sup> Pere, J. M. L'Ouganda, la Mission Catholique, et les Agents de la Compagnie anglaise, Paris 1893, p. 14.  
Thoonen, Father. Black Martyrs, London, 1942 p. 89.
- <sup>87</sup> Ham Mukasa. Simudda Nyuma I, p. 91.  
Mackay by His sister p. 186-7.
- <sup>88</sup> Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) p. 189.
- <sup>89</sup> Zimbe, M. Buganda ne Kabaka pp. 75-152.  
Miti, J. A Short History pp. 252-97.  
Ashe. Chronicles of Uganda pp. 90-100.
- <sup>90</sup> Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) pp. 204-5.
- <sup>91</sup> See: Faupel, F. African Holocaust, London, 1962.  
Kavulu, D. The Uganda Martyrs, Kampala, 1969.  
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- <sup>92</sup> Quoted in A. D. Low. The Mind of Buganda, -  
California, 1971, p. 17.
- <sup>93</sup> Zimbe, M. Buganda ne Kabaka, pp. 148-51.  
Ddiba, J. L. Eddini mu Uganda, Masaka, 1955,  
pp. 21-6.
- <sup>94</sup> Michael Twaddle "The Muslim Revolution in Buganda"  
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- <sup>95</sup> Ssekimwanyi, A. Ebimu, p. 6.  
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<sup>97</sup> Ashe, R. Chronicles of Uganda, London 1894,  
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 Bakale Mukasa. Entalo p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Edmund Burke III. "Pan-Islam and Moroccan  
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<sup>99</sup> Oliver, R. The Missionary Factor in East Africa,  
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<sup>100</sup> Kiwanuka, M. S. Ibid. (1971) p. 212.

<sup>101</sup> Katungulu, M. M. MSS p. 27.

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<sup>102</sup> Ssekimwanyi, A. Ebyafayo p. 5.  
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<sup>103</sup> Bakale Mukasa. Entalo pp. 7-9.

<sup>104</sup> Nyanzi, A. Entalo p. 9.

<sup>105</sup> Kagwa, A. Basekabaka pp. 164-171.

<sup>106</sup> Ssekimwanyi, A. Ebyafayo p. 6.

<sup>107</sup> Zimbe, M. Buganda ne Kabaka p. 241.

<sup>108</sup> Nsambu, A. Interview Jan. 1973.

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 Bakale Mukasa. Entalo p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> Nyanzi, A. Entalo p. 7.

## CHAPTER V

### ISLAM SPREADS TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY 1890-1921

Islamic influence, except in the case of the Northern Province and Bunyoro, spread from Buganda to the rest of the country. Unlike in Buganda, Islam was not whole heartedly received by the majority of local peoples in these areas. It remained, except in Busoga and the West Nile District, a religion of immigrant minorities like the Ganda, Swahilis, Arabs and Indians. Islam, unaided by political power, was unable to penetrate the still viable structures of these societies for unlike Buganda, the peoples in most surrounding districts belonged to societies that were still intact and firmly clung to their traditions. It was Christianity in alliance with British imperial power that was the instrument of change in these areas. Its preachings backed by imperial power and presence broke down the chains of traditional life and thus initiated the social revolution that had already taken place in Buganda. This is not to say, however, that Islam completely failed. As I shall show later on, many of the carriers of Islam to these regions such as the Baganda refugees, agents and Sudanese soldiers who went into these areas, not only stayed there and therefore gave Islam a permanent presence but also, they converted a few of the



local people to Islam.

In these areas, except in the case of Busoga; Madi, the West Nile District and Bugisu, Islam is a religion of a very tiny minority. Nowhere do Muslims comprise over five percent of the population. This is especially so in Ankole, Kigezi, Toro, Bunyoro, Teso, Karamoja, Acholi and Lango. There are many reasons, general and specific that caused this lack of enthusiasm for Islam in these areas. I hope to review a few of them when I deal with each individual district. But the main cause for Islam's failure to penetrate these societies is that those societies were still intact and strong. They still held to their customs and traditional way of life. Thus, whereas Ganda society was weak and thus open to external ideas, these societies were still firm and intact. I know it will be hard for East African Historians to agree with me that Ganda society was weaker than those of the surrounding tribes. After all her military and political organization in the nineteenth century was the most viable in the interlacustrine area. Her armies enforced the will of the Kabaka on most of the tribes that surrounded her. However, if by weak we mean inability to stop the penetration of foreign ideas and external influences into a particular traditional society, then Ganda society was weak. Its strength to resist external influences was almost exhausted by the nineteenth century. There were many cracks in her social structure that allowed the inflow and penetration of external influences. We have already discussed

how the Kabaka was one of the major instruments that brought about the weakening of Ganda customs, traditions and way of life. By so doing, he prepared the Baganda to receive new ideas or, to put it in another way, he made their minds open. The Baganda came to accept, unlike other tribes at that time in history, changes in their traditions without fear of natural catastrophe. Furthermore Ganda society was less rigidly divided along class, ethnic or caste lines. There was no rigid division of society into a permanent ruling elite such as the Bahima in Ankole or Bahuma in Bunyoro and commoners or Bairu in the above mentioned societies. The Kabaka chose his wives from any family in the land unlike in Bunyoro or Ankole where kings married only from particular clans. Any Muganda could rise from the poorest ranks of society to the highest positions in the land if he had the Kabaka's favor. The desire to prosper and rise to the top, as Kiwanuka has pointed out, created an intensive competition for the favor of the Kabaka. Because of this many Baganda became receptive and open to new ideas that they thought would make them prosper. To some Baganda, Christianity and Islam were seen in this perspective i.e. in so far as they would enable one to succeed in life. The result was that Baganda easily gave up their traditions and customs to new ideas that were apparently useful. Thus Buganda society was open with many gaps that allowed the penetration of new ideas. It could not resist taking them in even if it wanted to.

On the other hand, the societies that surrounded Buganda especially the kingdom areas such as Bunyoro (including Toro) and Ankole were still intact and strong. Their social structures had cracks as any society is bound to have, but these cracks were not as wide as those of Buganda. Traditional life and customs had more grip on these societies than was the case in Buganda. In Bunyoro and Ankole, society was divided into a ruling elite and a working mass. In Ankole, the rich cattle-owning Bahima formed the upper strata of society. It was from this elite that rulers of traditional Nkore, Mpororo and the surrounding principalities were drawn. To many observers and scholars, the Bahima were and still are an ethnic ruling elite whose ranks the working Bairu could not easily join within a space of one generation. But according to Samwiri Karugire the Bahima were a class "and the criterion of belonging to that class was wealth in cattle."<sup>1</sup> This would imply that ethnicity did not bar a man from reaching the top as long as he had hundreds of cattle. However, since over ninety percent of the cattle in the land were owned by Bahima, whose physical appearance incidently is very different from that of the working class, and since chiefs were recruited from this wealthy class, it follows that Ankole was also divided on an ethnic basis. On the one hand, there was a rich Bahima ruling class ethnically different from the rest of the people. On the other, there was a poor working class whose physical features were different from those of their wealthy neighbors. Like

Nkore, Bunyoro-Kitara society was segmented into two strata; a wealthy elite of Bahuma and a working mass of Bairu. The criterion of wealthy was, as in Ankole, cattle, but the division was more or less supplemented by ethnicity. These divisions in both these societies were real and although Karugire points out that men could rise and fall, the mobility was not as fluid as that in Buganda. The Mugabe or king of Nkore belonged to one ruling group or clan of the Bahinda. In Bunyoro, the Mukama or king was also recruited from one specific clan of the Babiito. No other clan could provide a ruler. In Buganda, on the other hand each clan could provide a candidate for the throne. This was made possible by making the king not only belong to the clan of his mother but was allowed to marry from any clan he wished. It was thus easier for "commoners" to come to power in Buganda than in Nkore or Bunyoro. Moreover, in Buganda, no princes could be made chiefs. But in Bunyoro and to some extent in Nkore, princes were often the chiefs and did a lot to maintain the structures of power as intact as possible. This was the best way in which the wealthy ruling class could maintain its position of power and social influence. New ideas could only disrupt the edifice from which the wealthy benefitted so much.

The hold of tradition on the people of these societies was stronger than its grips on Buganda. Thus Kabarega rejected Mutesa's appeal to join Islam for fear that this would be against the traditions of his society. When the

same ruler was injured in the process of being captured in 1899, he tried to persuade his son Duhaga to tear the bandage from his injured arm so as to fulfill the Kinyoro tradition that an incapacitated Mukama should die.<sup>2</sup> In Ankole, tradition did not allow circumcision and the Banyankole refused to have anything to do with it till the twentieth century. But even then, it was on a very small scale. In Buganda, however, where there was a similar custom, far more people revolted against their customs and got circumcised as early as the 1860's.

In societies without a central authority such as in Kigezi, Acholi or Lango, social control was exercised by the kinship group or clanhead. It is true there was no strong authority to enforce the observance of traditions either by example or by persuasion but this was compensated for by the many small units--clans, families, village councils and other groups--to which the people belonged. They enforced justice and made sure that traditions and customs were kept. It was moreover on the latter that the existence of society was supposed to depend. Thus in what is now modern Kigezi, a man who killed his brother was buried alive with his victim or killed by the hand of either his father or another surviving brother.<sup>3</sup> A girl guilty of incest was put to death by her father and the man responsible often suffered a similar fate. In this way the smaller social units enforced not only justice but the beliefs of the people. So strong were some of the beliefs of these

people that whereas in Buganda, the elite voluntarily gave up their ancient beliefs, in Kigezi it needed British government power to ban some ancient cults for example the Nyabingi spirit cult.

Why then, it might be asked, did so many of the peoples of Uganda become Christians especially after the establishment of Imperial power? How did Christianity break through the hard walls of tradition and custom that surrounded these societies? There are many reasons which I cannot claim to grasp. It is my hope that further research will untangle the mysteries that drown our understanding of why Christianity was so wholeheartedly adopted in such a short period. On the other hand I cannot accept the view that Christianity or Islam was more of a "true" religion than the traditional beliefs. This is a naive view of explaining such complex phenomena. However, as far as my little knowledge can explain, one explanation still stands in my mind. Christianity succeeded because it came under the umbrella of British imperial power. It was a power that was strong not only to beat the traditional rulers but also the traditional ghosts, spirits, cults and gods. To the people, Christianity and the Union Jack were almost interchangeable. This is especially so since most of the new rulers who succeeded did so with the help of not only British power but also with Christianity. Success became identified with Christianity and failure with non-cooperation with Christianity. Thus in Bunyoro, Kabarega who opposed the

British and Christianity failed. His son Yosiya Kitehimbwa, a boy of twelve who had been educated by Christian missionaries at Mengo and later baptised by Bishop Tucker, became the ruler of Bunyoro in 1899. When he failed to live up to the standards of his promoters, he was deposed in 1901. His older brother Andereya Duhaga who was a pupil of, and under the influence of Rev. A. B. Lloyd of the C.M.S. became the Mukama of Bunyoro. If he was a Muslim, he might have been called a fanatic but since he was a Christian, he has gone down to history as a devout (and not a fanatical) Christian. He abandoned many ancient customs and ways of life of his own people.<sup>4</sup> To the people, his success seemed to have come from his being a good Christian. In Ankole, Mbaguta who collaborated with Christianity and the British easily overcame his adversaries by placing his candidate, Kahaya, on the throne. In Toro, the Omukama Kasagama was not only placed on the throne by the British but also was always aided and surrounded by Christians. Yafeti came from Buganda with him and to be a Christian was a fashion in Toro. In Kigezi, the government joined hands with the Christian clergy in the suppression of not only the Nyabirgi spirits but also of all symbols of traditional beliefs such as the wearing of charms, amulets or praying to the dead.

The government's success in suppressing the powers of traditional beliefs also impressed the people. African peoples respected the ancient powers of the medicinemen of spirits, of ghosts, etc. because those powers worked terror

amongst them. When the British government came, together with Christian priests, the ancient traditional powers were systematically attacked and defeated. In Kigezi, the Nyabingi mediums and spirits were rounded up and imprisoned. Their power had thus met a better competitor who, according to the people, must have been more powerful. To them the government and Christianity were one and one joined religion to be in good stead, let alone to advance materially with the new forces. To some, the government must have looked like a great new powerful spirit covering all the land like a cloud from which showers of vengence could rain upon those who disobeyed. One of the best, if not the main, ways to obey such a force was to become a Christian. This involved the foresaking of old customs and ways of life.

Thus outside Buganda, it was the Christian missionaries aided by British governmental power that made people drop their customs and adopt a new outlook. This is not to suggest that the Imperial government ever planned or deliberately exterminated African customs. Its aim was to modernize and the missionaries seemed to be the best instruments of change. Often there were occasions of disagreements between the District commissioner and the Diocese about enforcement of laws and reform. But the mass of the people never knew this subtle difference. To them all were white men and if a Bishop said there was to be no work on Sunday or eating meat on Friday, they assumed it was the will of the government transmitted through the Bishop. Thinking

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missionaries might regret such a course as the events took. But they cannot deny that it achieved for them more than David Livingstone would have done unaided with such a power. Moreover, the second generation of Christians seem to be more real than the first one.

When the power of the traditional beliefs, customs and way of life had been thoroughly weakened in these areas by Christian and government power, then Islam also began to snatch a few converts. This was not only a very late process as we shall discuss in the next chapter, but also it was on a very small scale. But where traditional life was still intact, Islam did not make any gain.

Before proceeding to describe how and when Islam penetrated into each of the districts of Uganda, I feel it is essential to give the reader a picture of the type of people who carried Islam to the rest of Uganda. By so doing, we shall find out what type people they were, what their motives were and how they spread Islam. The first group of carriers were, naturally, the Arab, Swahili and other traders. Since many of them operated on an individual basis, we shall reserve their discussion as we review each area. The second group of people who carried Islam from Buganda to the rest of the country were the Baganda refugees who ran away from their country after their defeat in the religious wars that we described in the last chapter. The third and fourth groups of people were the Sudanese soldiers and Baganda "sub-imperialists" employed by the British imperial government.

They were employed by the government to do official duties but spread Islam in their spare time. In this way, the Imperial government provided factors that favored the spread of Islam. This is not to contradict my earlier notion that the imperial government did not deliberately help the spread of Islam. I still hold that view for the following reason: First the British officials who employed these Muslims did not do so to deliberately help Islam as it has been claimed. In most cases they hoped that these Muslims would not use their positions to advance their religion. Second, Muslims were only employed when a sufficiently capable Christian could not be found. This was the case with the Sudanese troops. There were no other trained military men to help support the young colony and so the British officials had no alternative but to hire these Muslims. And finally, whenever a Muslim official made a slight error and there was a Christian to replace him, he was quickly relieved of his duties. This happened in the case of Saleh in Busoga who was dismissed for using his position to spread Islam. Salimu Bwagu in Bugweri Busoga was easily dismissed at Bukaleeba and replaced by a Christian because, so it was claimed, he misinterpreted his boss' words in favor of his co-religionist, Mena Munulo. Thus imperial officials did not deliberately help Islam. If the presence of the Imperial government provided factors that helped Islam, this was an unplanned and unwanted development that must have embarrassed these officials later on.

### Refugees of the Religious Wars of Buganda

For about fifty years from the time of its introduction in Uganda to the end of the religious wars in Buganda, Islam remained mainly in Buganda region. After 1893, however, Islam was taken to all parts of the country by Baganda Muslims who found that they no longer had enough room to practice their religion in Buganda. Most available sources indicate that although Mutesa tried to enforce Islam, it remained mainly around the court and Kibuga area. There is no area in the interior far away from the capital that was a center of Islam. The first time when Muslims spread in the countryside was in 1875 or thereabouts when the king executed Muslim pages at Namugongo. Many Muslims ran away into the countryside and reappeared later on. There is no evidence even then to show that these Muslims who ran away from the court ever took Islam outside Buganda. It is true that Arabs and Swahilis went into areas outside Buganda but their number compared to those who came to Buganda is almost negligible. Bunyoro, Acholi and West Nile received a few trickles of Islamising influences from what is now Sudan but these influences do not seem to have left a strong impact. The eastern part of Uganda received very few visitors from the East coast for the Arabs and Swahilis dreaded passing through Masailand.

The first major group of people to carry Islam to the rest of Uganda were in fact Baganda Muslim refugees who, after their defeat found that they had lost everything at

court and government. They thus had to seek their fortunes elsewhere "for the new Buganda was in theory Christian and it was impossible to have status without a Christian name."<sup>5</sup> Many Muslims fled from Buganda not only because they had lost their social status and what they considered what life was worth but also for fear of losing their lives. According to Nyanzi, they remembered very well that when Christians retook Buganda, the latter burnt all Arabs at Natete although the Muslims had spared Fench missionaries while they were still in control. A prominent Muslim, Abdul Aziz Bulwadda was selected to escort these missionaries to Entebbe where they boarded boats for the south of the lake.<sup>6</sup> Another reason for their leaving was their unwillingness to be ruled by a non-Muslim, a Kaffir as they referred to non-Muslims. They went to areas that surrounded Buganda like Busoga, Ankole, Kiziba, Toro, Bunyoro etc. Many of them died and were never heard of again, such as Mukwenda Bukuda, Wamala the Ssekibobo, Nkongwe the Pokino, Abdul Kadir Kitunzi, Lwanga the Omuwanika, Amuli Kaddu the Omuteesa etc.

However, some did reach the surrounding areas. Those who were skilled enough, helped in spreading Islam to their new homes. In Ankole, the first group of people to preach Islam were these Muslim refugees. A very large group of them led by Kauzi and Abdul Affendi sought refuge with the ruler of Ankole. In Bulamogi, Busoga, Islam was introduced by Ali Lwanga, a Muslim refugee from Buganda; Lubogo expresses the state of affairs very well:

During Kisira's day, religious wars raged in Buganda between Mohammedans and Christian Protestants. Many Mohammedan deserters sought refuge in other countries. One of them named Ali Lwanga escaped into Busoga and besought Kisira to offer him shelter. Kisira then kept him as a refugee in his Mbuga of Gadumire. This is how Mohammedanism came to Bulamogi.<sup>7</sup>

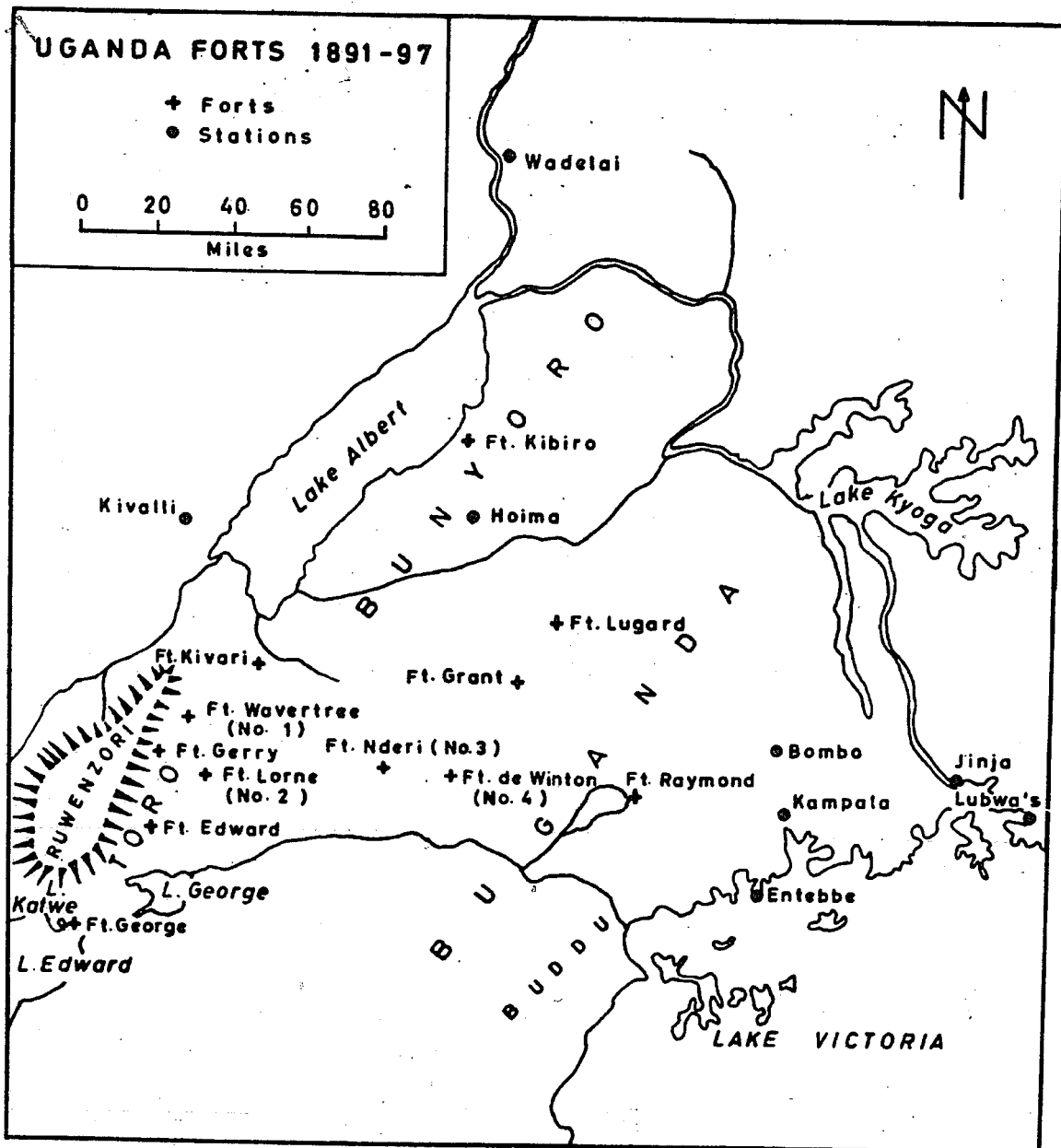
In Busiki, Busoga two Baganda refugees Adamu Kironde and Katetemera were the first people to teach Islam to the local people.<sup>8</sup> Yusufu Kitungulu, another Muslim refugee from Buganda is very well remembered in Busoga. These Baganda refugees were able to convert a few of the peoples of the areas they went to because of the new and strange skills they had learned from the Arabs. They knew Swahili, an inter-tribal language which gave them ability not only to communicate with Africans from different tribes but also with Europeans. They knew other skills such as soap making, mending cloths, guns and cooking the Swahili way which gave them extra respect from the local people. For example, Ali Lwanga knew Swahili very well, could make soap and mend guns. Because of these skills, many of the Baganda Muslims prospered in the areas of their adoption and became men of influence which gave Islam an extra push forward. Ali Lwanga became first an interpreter to the D.C. and then a Ssaza chief. He married hundreds of women and because "he slaughtered 6-7 head of cattle every day" many people came to his house where Islam was often discussed. In Bugweri as we said earlier, Luzige, another Muslim refugee became very friendly to the ruler, Menya Munulo. Munulo was so impressed by Luzige and other Baganda Muslim refugees that

he became a Muslim and ordered all his people to do the same. In Bukedi, the Muslim refugee who spread Islam there was Ibrahim Mulogo.<sup>9</sup> In Ankole, Kauzi proved himself to be a very useful man and was later made a Ssaza chief of Bukanga. When he was killed by Kanyabuzaana, Abdalla Afendi, another Muganda Muslim was made the Ssaza chief.

#### Sudanese (Nubi) Soldiers

The first category of Muslim peoples employed by British officials and who helped carry Islam in Uganda were the Sudanese Troops (known locally as Nubian). They were first recruited by Captain Lugard of the Imperial British East African Company in 1889. They were formerly employed by the Khedive of Egypt's officials like Emin Pasha but were abandoned by him when the Sudan was lost to the Mahdists. Lugard recruited them in 1889 to keep the troubled waters of Uganda under control. Other officials of the British government like Thurston recruited more of them into the Uganda armed forces. They were strategically placed in stations in many parts of Uganda. Most of these stations like Bombo, Entebbe, Fort Portal, Kampala have become Uganda's administrative and commercial centers. Their number was such that they were bound to have an effect on the local population. Lugard enlisted some six hundred troops while other officials recruited even more. Besides the soldiers themselves, there were their followers. Thurston thought that there were about ten thousand followers for "all

Map II: Showing forts where Sudanese (Nubian) troops were stationed.



O.W. Furley

soldiers had wives, concubines, children, male and female slaves."<sup>10</sup>

These soldiers and their followers brought in Islamising influences not only because "very many of the soldiers were absorbed into civilian life" but because of their official position. Because of their positions as soldiers and men of influence, they used their influence to spread Islam and to discourage Christianity. For example in Toro they seized and tore up several copies of the Lord's Prayer Books and the Ten Commandments in Lutoro which had been sent to Yafeti.<sup>11</sup> In some places, they were bold enough even to disperse congregations. But they did all this without letting their masters know. Some of them, like Fadl-  
al-Mullah of Aringa in West Nile, became chiefs and used their influence to spread Islam.

These Nubian or Sudanese troops introduced a dilute Malik Madhab into the West Nile District. However, further research on the topic of the Madhab practiced in Uganda is not yet fully done. We know for certain that most of the coastal traders were Shāfiī and that the royal house of Zanzibar practiced another school of law.

#### Baganda "Sub-imperialists"

The second group of Muslims recruited by British imperial officials who carried Islam to the various parts of Uganda were Baganda agents or "sub-imperialists" who collaborated with the British to administer the protectorate



before sufficient local or European personnel were available. The Baganda were recruited as agents on the assumption that they knew more about orderly government than the tribes that surrounded them and on the fact that since Baganda had collaborated well with the British, some reward had to be given them. It is true the majority were Christians but a few of them were Muslims as the table below will show. Many of these Muslims went out of Buganda as they could not get positions of power in their country which had become in effect Christian. As agents and chiefs in the areas where they went, these Muslims used their influence to give Islam respect.

Many Baganda Muslims spread to all parts of Uganda attaching themselves to whoever gave them hope. A very big group of Baganda Muslims attached itself to Semei Kakungulu, who like them, had found Buganda too small to operate in. Kakungulu went east and while he planted British rule wherever he went, his Muslim Baganda subordinates were planting Islam at the same time--almost without his noticing it. The Anglican Bishop complained that "a large retinue of Muslims around him" were spreading Islam in the Eastern Province.<sup>12</sup> These Muslims were provided with a Mu'allim, Yusufu Byakuno to guide them in matters of religion. Some of them held key positions in Kakungulu's "empire." Thus Jafali Mayanja ruled South Bugisu, Sale Lule ruled North Bugisu and Abdalla Makubire was in Bunyule.<sup>13</sup> Jafali Maya nja was later transferred to Kaberamaido where no doubt he carried out Islamising

campaigns as evidenced by a pocket of Muslims in that area. Other minor officials in Kakungulu's retinue were Bumbakali Kamy, Abdalla Makumbi, Sulimani Ddamulira, Abdallahim and others. In fact it can safely be stated that real spread of Islam in the Eastern Province began in these years i.e. 1899-1910, the years of Baganda and British conquest.

The following are lists of some of the Baganda agents ruling on behalf of the British Imperial Governments. Those marked with a star were Muslims.

A. LANGO DISTRICT: 7th September, 1911.

Name of Post	Name of Agent	Followers
1. Olett	*Bulukani	11
2. Nagi	*Yusufu	11
3. Nabieso	?Ibrahimu	14
4. Omulla's	*Yubu	11
5. Chegere	*Dauda	14

Adopted from S.M.P. 519/09 Entebbe Government Archives.

B. TESO: 11th March, 1913.

Post	Name of Agent	Date of engagement	Discharge
1. Tiriri	*Asumani	Sept., 1908	March 1913
2. Kobo	*Ibrahim Mpigiri	Nov., 1909	" "
3. Nariama	*Yunusu Kagwa	April, 1910	" "
4. Abella	*Adamu Mukasa	March, 1909	" "
5. Kupujani	?Zakaria Bafira-wala	Sept., 1909	" "
6. Kamoda	*Hamis	April, 1911	" "

Adopted from S.M.P. 519/09/5147 Entebbe Government Archives.

C. BUKEDI: 31st March 1913

Name of County	Name of Agent	Date of Engagement
<u>Budama</u>	Asanasio	October, 1906
	Reuben	December, 1906
	*Amani	August, 1908
	Sezi	June, 1908
	Aloni	July, 1910
	Semu	November, 1908
<u>Bunyuli</u>	Ephrahim	December, 1911
	Lasito Sajjabi	November, 1910
<u>Palisa</u>	*Abdalla	February, 1906
	*Amuri	September 1910
	Petro	November, 1908
<u>Bugweri</u>	*Nuwa	December, 1908
	Sedulaka	Sept., 1910
<u>Central County Bugishu</u>	Alifonsi	April, 1909
	*Salimu	March, 1911
	Kasuwa	July, 1910
<u>S.E. Bugishu County</u>	*Bomali	October, 1907
	*Saleh	" "
	?Musa	" "
	*Sadi	January, 1911
<u>N.E. Bugishu</u>	*Ramazani	August, 1906
	*Salimu	July, 1907
	*Ishmairi	June, 1909
	Anoka	November, 1908
	Aligizanda	November, 1908
	*Jafari	Sept., 1910
	*Sulimani	December, 1910
	*Rajabu	February, 1911
	Labani	April, 1910

Adopted from S.M.P. 519/09 of 7th March, 1913 Entebbe Government Archives.

Another category of Baganda sub-imperialists were those recruited directly by the British or by local officials with the approval of the former to take up responsible positions in the various districts of the country. Some of these agents were Muslims and used their positions to spread Islam. These Muslim sub-imperialists were normally county

or sub-county chiefs, with lots of responsibility and lots of fertile positions to distribute to those who supported them. Moreover, their connection with the coastal traders had given them the advantage of learning Swahili that connected them to the Europeans whereas the Christian or pagan agent did not know that mysterious tongue. They also had learned skills like soap making, ironmongery, cloth making etc. that made them a wanted commodity amongst the people they worked. In Kigezi, the first Muslim to try and convert the local people was Hassan Ssebowa, a Muganda Muslim agent who is still alive.<sup>14</sup> Abdalla Namunye another Muslim agent ruled in Bufumbira and Sulimani Ntangamalalo ruled in Kinkizi.<sup>15</sup> In Ankole by 1899 Kauzi, a Muganda Muslim was already the Ssaza chief of Bukanga. When he was killed after a clash with Kanyabuzaana, "the whole of Bukanga was then put under a Muganda chief, Abdul Effendi" who was also a Muslim.<sup>16</sup> When in 1905, the Acting sub-commissioner was killed at Ibanda, the whole of Mitoma was put under a Muslim agent, Abdul Aziz Bulwadda. In Busoga, J. J. Willis complained that "the larger number of those in authority in Usoga are or were till quite recently, also Mohammedans."<sup>17</sup> Ali Lwanga was first an agent but later became the interpreter to the D. C. He was made a Ssaza chief later on.

These sub-imperialists used their influence to spread whatever religion they belonged to. For example in Ankole Abdul Aziz Bulwadda did his best to spread Islam and discourage Christianity. He was "harsh on the Church and

ordered it off the site it had taken. . . . Kondore, the evangelist was so harassed that he resigned and left."<sup>18</sup>

With the exception of Busoga, the British officials seem not to have been aware of what their Muslim subordinates were doing.

Added to those already mentioned, there were the many low government or domestic servants like clerks, interpreters, watchmen, cooks, messengers, sweepers, etc. In the early days of the Protectorate, the medium of communication between Europeans and Africans was Swahili. The Muslim Baganda and Swahili servants due to their contact with Arabs learned it better than their Christian counterparts. They were therefore recruited by the colonial government and officials to do the jobs mentioned above. Being near the white men and also being in positions of status gave their religion a special place. Abdul Aziz Bulwadda who was promoted Ssaza chief of Mitoma was Wilson's interpreter during the inquiry into the murder of Galt at Ibanda in Ankole.<sup>19</sup> Bwagu who was a friend to Menya Munulo of Bugweri was an interpreter to Grant at Bukaleeba. Ali Lwanga who was later made a Ssaza chief in Busoga was an interpreter. The Swahili interpreter of Semei Kakungulu was a Muganda Muslim named Makubire.<sup>20</sup> In Kigezi, some Baziba from Tanganyika were recruited to serve because they knew Swahili. Many of them were Muslims. They were removed in 1929 together with the Baganda agents to give room to Bakiga. The man who circumcised Swaibu Ssemakula the former Mufti of

Uganda was a District Commissioner's cook. In 1901, the collector of Unyoro "enlisted thirty Swahili, mostly station porters for the armed Police" and by 1902 "Swahili villages" were very well established near Fort Portal and Hoima. By that time, the Police Sergeant at Fort Portal was a Muslim, Sergeant Ibrahim.<sup>21</sup> Juma bin Abdalla who did a lot for the Muslims at Entebbe around 1900-6 was a cook to the chief engineer Marrogordate and Captain Schlobach respectively.<sup>22</sup> Abdalla Makubire whom we mentioned earlier worked as interpreter at the following places (a) Budaka (1901-1904), (b) Mbale (1904-9) and as agent at (i) Mazimasa (1909-1910), (ii) Palisa (1910-1912) and again at Mazimasa from 1912-1922. He was retired in 1922 but was called up by the government to do work of special nature. Thus in 1924 he supervised communal road building, in 1924 supervised the building of the native hospital at Mbale and was made agent again at Soroti in 1927. The D.C. of Mbale described him as "an excellent Swahili, Luganda and Lugishu interpreter."<sup>23</sup> Ramathan Khan was employed as a clerk at Masindi in 1900.<sup>24</sup> Ali bin Salim worked at Gulu from 1912 to 1920 and had worked previously at Koba.<sup>25</sup>

Having dealt with the general causes and carriers of Islam, we are now ready to briefly describe the spread of Islam in each of the districts of the country. I must emphasize that this is a brief description for much work still remains to be done. Until then, I hope the following summaries will guide the reader on the History of Islam in the following

districts.

#### ANKOLE

As in Buganda, the first Muslims to come to Ankole (the larger Ankole including the central traditional Nkore) were non-African foreigners who came by way of the East African coast. But the group that imposed the greatest Islamic impact on Ankole were Africans from Buganda who had been expelled out of their homes as a result of the Christian victory in the Buganda religions wars that we talked of earlier on. But Islam has up to now, failed to attract the Banyankole due to the Baganda Muslims' insistence on circumcision and the identification of Islam with Ganda rather than Ankole way of life. However, the few Muslims that are in Ankole have devised various means of survival that have made them endure the religiously hostile environment around them.

The best known first Muslim to come to Ankole was Snay bin Amir who passed through Ankole in 1852 on his way to Buganda.<sup>26</sup> Besides passing through and making a few friends in Ankole, Snay bin Amir does not seem to have left Islamic influence behind him in this area. Ankole next had outside visitors thirty years later. In the years 1889-91, Stanley, Lugard and Emin Pasha came to Ankole.<sup>27</sup> While returning to relieve Emin Pasha who had been cut off by the Mahdist Rebellions in the Sudan, Stanley passed through Ankole in 1889 while proceeding to the East African coast.

As his books show, many of his party especially porters and askaris were Muslims but they seem to have left no Muslim influence. Under the service of Germany, Emin Pasha returned to Ankole in 1891 and on 19th April he was in Mpororo. Ntare sent him presents. Emin and many of his supporters leaned towards Islam but they seem not to have bothered preaching it. On his way to pick up the Sudanese troops that had been abandoned by Emin and back, Lugard passed through Ankole in 1891. There is no evidence that any few of these troops remained in Ankole or preached Islam. In 1894, Ankole became part of the British territories when Ntare signed an agreement to that effect with Major Cunningham. When MacAllister pitched his tents at Mbarara in 1899, Islamic influence came to Ankole through his Sudanese, Swahili and Ganda followers. Many other Muslim functionaries followed. One of them Hamis bin Songoro acted as an interpreter for a long time before he was retired in April, 1909 due to old age.<sup>28</sup> Muhammad bin Salimu who came from Tanga as a trader, became a prominent Muslim teacher and so did Munyi Bija of Lamu.<sup>29</sup>

But the group that brought the greatest Islamic influence to Ankole were the Baganda Muslim refugees who ran away after their defeat in the Religions wars of Buganda. They came to Ankole by way of Kabula led by Kauzi "omushare" (i.e. the mutilated).<sup>30</sup> Most sources assert that Kauzi was a Muganda but Bamunoba says that he was "a prominent Munyoro Muslim" who joined the Baganda ranks while they were at



Kijungute, came with them to Buganda when the tables seemed to favor Islam and led the group that run to Ankole when fortunes turned against the Muslims around 1899. The name Kauzi does not seem to be a Ganda name and so there might be truth in Bamunoba's claim. Anyway Kahaya allowed these Baganda Muslims to settle in Ankole. They were very many--at least a thousand--and only the names of the prominent ones such as Abdul Affendi, Yahaya Nyengere, J. Mwamula, Saidi Jita, Sabiti Ssebalamu, Sudi Kyiribwa, Salimu Mpulugusa could be remembered by people we interviewed. Unlike the Christians, many of them came to Ankole to stay, for many took up chieftainships, while others joined various trades.

It was through chieftainships that these Baganda Muslims made the impact of Islam in Ankole felt to the extent that it was. Kauzi became the Ssaza chief of South Bukanga and soon the British and Ankole administrations recognized him and had "the highest regard" of his services.<sup>31</sup> But in 1900 a clash occurred between Kauzi and Kanyabuzana, the original ruler of the area and Kauzi was killed. Kanyabuzana escaped over the Germany border and another Muganda Muslim Abdul Affendi was made the ruler of the area. With very many immigrant Baganda in Bukanga, it was feared that the area might follow in the footsteps of Kabula and become part of Buganda. This did not happen for in 1907, Abdul Affendi was made to agree to become one of the Omugabe's chiefs, thus making Bukanga once more part of Ankole. This

brought within Ankole borders a large number of Muslims. In another area of Ankole in 1905, another Muganda Muslim, Abdul Aziz Bulwadda became a county-chief. This was brought about by the murder of the Acting sub-commissioner, Western Province, Galt, at Ibanda. The Ssaza chief of Mitooma, Rwakakaiga, was exiled and replaced by Bulwadda who had been Wilson's interpreter during the inquiry at Ibanda.<sup>32</sup> He was harsh and so tyrannical that he was removed later on. However, on the side of Islam, he did a lot. He brought and allowed a Muslim teacher, an Asian by the name of Barumu, to preach Islam and teach the Koran to the people at Ibanda.<sup>33</sup> He was harsh on the Christians so much so that Kondere the evangelist resigned the left Ibanda.<sup>34</sup>

Despite Bulwadda's example many other Muslims, often Baganda, were appointed chiefs in Ankole especially on the sub-county level. Looking at each county in turn we find in:

Mitooma: The Sabadu, Lasidi Mukasa (appointed in 1917); the Ssabagabo, Kasimu Ssajjabi (1905); the Ssabawali, Abdullahamani Gabo (1905) were Muslims.<sup>35</sup>

Igara: The Mummyuka, Abdallah Muwanika (appointed 1920); and the Ssabagabo, Abdallah Kyamera were Muslims.

Buzimba: The Musale, Swalihi Mpokya (appointed 1909) was a Muslim.

Bukanga: The Kyambalango, Abdul Affendi, (1905) the Mummyuka

Akaya Nyengere; the Ssabadu, Abdalla Semyano; and the Ssabagabo, Abdul Aziz Maleku (appointed in 1907) were all Muslims.

Kajara: The Mutuba I, Adamu Mutasa (appointed in 1908) and the Mutuba II, Amiri Munofa (appointed in 1907) were Muslims. The sources indicate other minor chiefs in Ankole who were Muslims that I have not bothered to include here.

Despite the advantage which Muslim chiefs might have given to Islam, Islam was not embraced wholeheartedly by the Banyankole. The Banyankole objected to the rite of circumcision and the Kiganda dressing through which Islam came to Ankole. By tradition, the Banyankole do not circumcise and they considered the rite very shameful. Bamunoba pointed out that a man who is circumcised, even by nature, might never be given a girl for marriage. Katate and Kamugungunu and indeed many Banyankole call Muslims "abashare" (the mutilated). So much did they hate circumcision that it took twenty years after the arrival of Baganda Muslims before a Muryankole, Rwaari, was circumcised in 1911. His father was working for a Muganda parish chief named Zakariya in Rwampara who allowed his son to be circumcised, it would seem, in order to keep his job. But all his kinsmen cast him out of their community calling him, "the mutilated, the circumcised, the half man, the Muganda" and other abusive names. In 1964, Rwaari lived peacefully at Kagango near Kabwohe and was the head of the Muslim community of Itendero.

He was a rich man and had adopted Ganda ways of life like eating Matooke, using Luganda, etc. Another problem that was and has been an obstacle in the way of Islam in Ankole is the Ganda bag in which it was carried. Bamunoba and Bagatagira have pointed out that when a Munyankole becomes a Muslim, he adopts Kiganda ways such as happened in the case of Rwaari. His fellow Banyankole no longer regard him as one of them and he becomes completely cut off from his blood kinsmen. Moreover, Islam in Ankole is preached and led by Baganda personalities. Thus most of the Sheiks, the Imams and other Muslim religious leaders are, or until recently were, Baganda.

But the few Muslims in Ankole have had the will to survive and devised various means of doing so. They started to marry as many Banyankole girls as they could, they lived in concentrations by themselves, have undertaken business ventures and undertaken public discussions with members of other religions on the merits of Islam. By marrying as many Banyankole girls as they could, they would expand their community through enlarged birth rates. But as Bamunoba has pointed out, the few Banyankole girls who married Muslims were not only laughed at for marrying "abashare" but were often cursed and expelled out of their original communities by their elders. The second tactic they adopted was to congregate together and live in communities more or less consisting of Muslims only. Thus in Isingiro, they are concentrated in Bukanga and Nyamitanga; in Kajara they are

found at Rwashamairwe and Nyamunuuka; in Igara at Ishaka and Bushenyi; in Shema at Itendero and Kabwohe; in Kashari at Kakoba and Ruharo; their settlements being located at roadsides by the trading centers in whose economic activity they are fully involved. Probably what has made the Muslim community in Ankole not only survive but also prosper is their ability as petty traders and businessmen. Most of the distribution and to some extent wholesale businesses are in the hands of Muslims. Writing about Ishaka a small town in West Ankole, Kabwejere concluded that the Muslims are "the Jews of business in Ankole."<sup>36</sup> A walk through Mbarara business center and a talk with the most successful traders in that town can indeed confirm his statement. Involvement in trade has given Ankole Muslims ability to buy what they want and to achieve some form of psychological comfort. And finally, probably after realizing that someone had to explain Islam to the rest of the people, Muslims in Ankole have adopted a Socratic method of expounding their doctrines to the rest of the people in a way not found elsewhere in Uganda. They often sit on verandas of their shops or by roadsides and begin not only to explain to others what Islam is about, but also argue vigorously on the merits and weaknesses of other religions as compared to theirs. Mr. Musa Mushanga of the Department of Sociology tells me that he has enjoyed these meetings very often in Shema and has been amazed by their quality and sincerity. Rev. Bamunoba of Kakoba T.T.C. Mbarara tells me that he has often enjoyed

these discussions.

They have indeed survived, built mosques, Koran Schools and a number of them have been made Sheiks. The first mosques were built in Bukanga but the surviving oldest mosque is at Kyalubembula. Others include Buyanje and Kitwe. At Mbarara alone, there are two beautiful Friday Mosques at Kaboha and Nyamitanga. Koran Schools of high standards are found at Kaboha, Kabwohe and Nyamitanga.

Ankole has produced some of Uganda's best known Sheiks such as Ssemugenyi, Zikusooka, Male, Wanimba and many others.

#### BUNYORO

It would seem that the first Muslims to come to Bunyoro came from the North in form of slave traders and caused such a devastation that the Bakama proved powerless to combat them.<sup>37</sup> They were of Turko--Egyptian origin and not pure Arabs from Arabia. They started coming in, or probably before the reign of Kamurasi, the father of Kabarega. Kamurasi died in 1869 and in the succession struggles that resulted between Kabarega and Kabagumire both combatants employed Muslim soldiers, some of whom were deserters from Equatoria.<sup>38</sup> Mutesa's party which was sent to help one of the rivals in 1869-70 clashed with some of these Sudanese soldiers and its leader, Mujabi Omutabuza was killed in the struggle.<sup>39</sup> In 1872, Egyptian Imperialism made itself felt in Bunyoro. In that year, the Khedive's

Agent, Samuel Baker annexed Bunyoro to Egypt. Almost all his soldiers were Muslims. He built a school at Masindi and appointed his Clerk, a Muslim by the name of Ramadan, as the Headmaster.<sup>40</sup> How much Islamic influence filtered from these Northerners to the Banyoro is not easy to assess. Outwardly, Arabic influence was visible. When Emin Pasha visited Kabarega later on, he found him clad in "Arab dress and speaking Arabic" while his messengers were looking for clerks in Khartoum. When Kabarega was in trouble from the Baganda/British attack, he sent, around 1897, an embassy to the Mahdists in Khartoum to summon aid "as he heard there was a Mahati or a big chief who was able to fight white men and he promised a big present if he would come and help him to overcome those he was at war within Unyoro."<sup>41</sup> It was headed by Faragalla, a native of Madi who had settled in Bunyoro. Three Unyoro Ssaza chiefs, Lubulwa, Mohenda, and Manyara followed him. But only Kiiza, Tibiata and Basekinsonga came back by 1902. Other Northerners who brought in Muslim influence are, of course, the Sudanese troops we mentioned earlier.

Another group of Muslims who brought Islamic influence were Zanzibari traders from the East African Coast who managed to by-pass Buganda and reach Bunyoro. H. B. Thomas claims that by 1886 Kabarega had a colony of Zanzibari traders by his camp at Mparo who came by the direct route through Karagwe.<sup>42</sup> One of these traders, Muhammad Bbiti though he was a Turko-Albanian had settled on the East

African Coast for some time. He visited Bunyoro twice but on his last visit, he got trapped into a local struggle, was captured by Kabarega's forces together with Casti and has never been heard of ever since. The latter made good his escape. But the leading Zanzibar merchant in Bunyoro in Kabarega's time was Abd er-Rahman. He sold arms to the Banyoro in return for ivory and slaves. It is reported by Uzoigwe that by 1889, Kabarega had over 1,800 guns many of which were purchased from Zanzibari traders.

The last group of outsiders to bring Islamic influence into Bunyoro were the Baganda. It has already been noted how Mujabi Omutabuza came into Bunyoro to help one of the competitors for the Bunyoro throne. Mujabi was a Muslim reader.<sup>43</sup> He was killed while trying to storm a fortified Sudanese post. Then of course came Mutesa's Muslim missionary expedition that we mentioned earlier on. Kabarega rejected the message of the prophet and so it left no Islamic impact in Bunyoro. In the period of religious wars in Buganda in 1889-94, many Muslims took refuge in Bunyoro especially at Kijungute. Kabarega helped them not because he sympathized with their religious zeal but because of the diplomatic advantage he saw in such an enterprise. Buganda divided would-be a weaker Buganda and if Bunyoro helped Muslims take over Buganda, they would naturally be his friends. However, the Baganda Muslims created a very bad impression on the Banyoro. Carrying no food, they fed on the local populations by looting and stealing.<sup>44</sup> As Dunbar and Byaruhanga have



again emphasized, the Banyoro took with suspicion any bag that came via Buganda and carried by Baganda.

I have found it hard to trace exactly who first taught Islam to the Banyoro and when he did so. The Rev. Byaruhanga--Akii,i in an interview with Lwanga on April 17th, 1968 was told that it was Budarahamani Omurunganwa. In Luganda "Omulungana" means half-breed from the coast and so presumably Burahani was Swahili. Sheik Omar Kanyabuzaana of Kigede, Bugahya Bunyoro told Muhammad Kazimiraine that it was Asumani Mulohoza who was one of the Baganda Muslim refugees who run and stayed in Bunyoro teaching.<sup>45</sup> Kamardin Shumshidin, a Bohara trader in Masindi said that it was Musikiri a Swahili who came from Tanganyika. The Bunyoro Church Magazine of 1931-40 just mentions that the first Muslim preacher came to Bunyoro in 1889. Since this was the period of the Buganda religious wars when many Baganda Muslims went abroad and began to teach, the date might be roughly correct.

The manner in which the first teachers of Islam taught their religion in Bunyoro is still difficult to plot. The few Baganda Muslims in Bunyoro tried their best to bring more people to Islam. But the Banyoro disliked circumcision not only because it was painful, but also, because it violated their customs. Once a ruler had a cut that spilled his blood, he ceased to rule as King of Bunyoro. Likewise the princes and territorial chiefs abhorred anything that would make them spill their blood. As a consequence, Islam was

unwelcome to the ruling elite of Bunyoro. There were no Muslim chiefs to draft people into Islam by example such as was the case in Busoga. As I said earlier on, Duhaga II was a staunch Protestant and all his chiefs followed suit. Only one prominent chief by the name of Kajogolo "perverted to Mohammedanism" just before the missionaries wanted to make him face a public remonstrance. From then on "he has shown himself for more active in propagating the religion of the false prophet than ever he was as a soldier of the cross" and used to incite his supporters to disturb Christian gatherings.<sup>46</sup> It would however, seem that this was a storm in a teacup--a flicker in a big area of darkness. The appointment of Prince Aramanzani Mwirimubi in 1899 as leader of Muslims in Bunyoro gave more legitimacy to Islam but does not seem to have had the same effect as that of Princes Mbogo and Kakungulu in Buganda.

Gradually, however, the small number of Muslims began to increase. By 1913 there were 2875 Muslims in Hoima and 1503 in Masindi.<sup>47</sup> Many of these were Indian, Swahili and Arab traders in the area.<sup>48</sup> There was a Swahili village in which some members of the royal family "have been living immoral lives" according to the missionaries.<sup>49</sup>

#### TORO

Toro is one of those interlucustrine polities that came into existence from the declining might of Bunyoro. Toro, especially Mwenge and Kyaka, was a part of Bunyoro--

Kitara. But in, or around, 1830 Kaboyo, son of Kyebambe III Nyamutukwa of Bunyoro was sent by his father to collect tribute from Toro and Busongora. When he reached the area, he liked the country and the people were willing to have him as their king. He rebelled against his father who, at first sent punitive expeditions against him. But Kyebambe Nyamutukura was at the time an old and weak man; so he let the matter pass, forgave his son and Toro became an independent polity. After Kaboyo's death, his three sons Kazana Ruhanga, Nyaika Kasunga and Kato Rukidi fought for mastery. At first Kazana seized the throne but Nyaika killed him and became Omukama. Kato solicited the help of Banyankole to overcome his brother but failed. Then he called upon the Baganda who drove Nyaika to Mboga across the Semuliki river. But when the Baganda left, Nyaika came back with force and killed Kato Rukidi. Meanwhile Bunyoro under Kabarega was waking up again and Nyaika was faced with a more formidable foe. He soon died a natural death and his sons, as usual, fought for the throne. Kabarega took the opportunity of these succession quarrels to try and re-impose the rule of Bunyoro. Olini Mukabirere, the successful candidate was captured by Kabarega's forces. Mukarusa and Namuyonjo made a bid but failed. Nyaika's wife escaped with three young sons to Ankole and sought Ntare's protection. However, Kabarega sent word to Ntare that the children were to be killed. Two of them were murdered but the mother managed to escape with the third, Kasagama, to Buddu in

Buganda. Mother and son were given refuge by a Mutoro chief of the Toro royal family who had been captured by Baganda but later given the chieftainship of Kitanda. His name was Byakweyamba. Here Kasagama stayed till he was picked up in 1891 by Lugard who gave him the throne of Toro on British/Buganda terms. This involved accepting the Union Jack and becoming a Christian.

Islamic influence was brought to Toro by Baganda agents and Sudanese troops. Before 1870, Pokino Mukasa who was at that time a Muslim "reader" invaded Busongora.<sup>50</sup> As we mentioned earlier, Kato Rukidi was given assistance around 1871 by the Baganda to fight his brother Nyaika.<sup>51</sup> But though this was a time of intensive Islamic activity in Buganda, there is little evidence to show that the expedition tried to preach Islam in Toro. In 1875, some Nyamwezi porters in the service of Stanley who passed through Toro around this time decided to stay in Toro.<sup>52</sup> Although they were Muslims, they seem to have left little impact. In 1881, or around there, Choli (Tori) a coastal half-caste led a Baganda army on behalf of Mutesa I to restore Namuyonjo whom Kabarega had deposed on the throne of Toro. Though Namuyonjo died of smallpox, Choli stayed in Toro for six months ravaging the country.<sup>53</sup> But since his behavior was so horrible, I doubt whether any doctrines he might have imparted would have been adhered to by the people whom he terrorized.

The number of Muslims in Toro increased with the

coming of Captain E. Lugard of the British Imperial East African Company in 1891. On his way to pick up Sudanese troops, Lugard came with Kasagama, Baganda and a number of Swahili. Rukidi claims that the first batch of Swahili traders came in Toro with Lugard.<sup>54</sup> Lugard built forts at the salt lake (Fort George) and Fort Edward (where he left Kasagama). These forts were garrisoned by Swahili (who were Muslims) and Baganda askaris. Then he proceeded North to get the Sudanese soldiers. He came back with over 8000 couls in Toro most of whom were Muslims. He built forts Wavertree, Lorne, Kivari and Grant in Toro to guard Kasagama against Kabarega. In each fort, he established a Sudancese garrison and settlement of some two thousand people, nearly all of whom were practicing Muslims.

When Lugard left Toro in 1893, these Sudanese soldiers were in fact left as the real power in the country. Both Kasagama and Batoro were at their mercy. They discouraged the spread of Christianity vigorously, and sometimes ruthlessly. For example they tore up several copies of the Lord's Prayer books that had been sent to Kasagama through Yafeti and sometimes dispersed Christian congregations.<sup>55</sup> Kasagama sent messages to Lugard asking him against the troops. The Batoro identified Islam with the troops which was thus unfortunate. However, with the effective establishment of British rule many of these Sudanese lived peacefully in Toro. Many of them became absorbed in civilian lives. For example Murjan Ramadhan

was a prominent former soldier who lived in Toro for many years up to 1915 or thereabouts.<sup>56</sup> On my visit to Toro in 1970, I interviewed two prominent Muslims, Khadi Jangirisi of Muguru and Nuwa Muhammadi of Kitumba, Fort Portal who are descendants of these Sudanese soldiers. The area around Kitumba on Fort Portal--Kampala road is heavily populated by them. There is a big Friday mosque to which many of them go.

Many of the Swahilis also came to Toro to stay. Hamis bin Said who came in the 1890's was, by 1900, a successful trader in Toro.<sup>57</sup> By 1902, there was already a "Swahili village" near Fort Portal and the sergeant was sergeant Major Ibrahim, another Swahili.<sup>58</sup> On the border of Toro and Congo Free State, there was a very large number of Swahilis, Arabs and a number of other "undesirable characters" who carried out illicit trade in ivory.<sup>59</sup> Some of these Swahilis became teachers of Islam and settled down as Muallims.

Baganda Muslim warriors from Buganda raided Toro occasionally in the period 1892-3. In 1892 they raided Kyaka and Kasagama sent an army of Nubians under a Mutoro by the name of Nasanairi Mugurusi.<sup>60</sup> In 1893, they invaded Busongora and Mwenge. They captured and imprisoned de Winton who died in their hands on 13th April, 1893. These Baganda Muslims were rough with the local population. They captured many Batoro, some of whom became Muslims and brought them to Buganda. Probably due to their harshness, these Baganda

warriors did not leave an Islamic influence on the Batoro. However, the second wave of Baganda Muslims, in the form of refugees left a mark on Toro. These were the Muslim refugees who run away from Buganda. There were many of them but the best remembered were Abdalla Gantungo, Amiri Mbuga and Aziz Abdalla.<sup>61</sup> The latter, Aziz Abdalla, is well remembered for the work he rendered to the Muslim Community in Toro. His father Abdalla (the Ganda name being lost to memory) was a Muganda Muslim who fought in the religions wars. After the defeat of the Muslims, he run for safety to Kiziba in Tanganyika. Aziz was born to him there and was educated in the households of Arabs and Swahili before settling finally in Kyaka (Tanganyika). Then he went to Mbarara where he taught Islam to the local community. When he came to Toro in 1910, he found that the Islamic teacher, Abdallah Gantungo was sick. Gantungo knew Aziz's father and so he asked the young man to stay on and teach. The young man accepted and stayed in Toro till 1950. Hassan Kamihanda says that Aziz Abdalla was the force behind the building of the mosques of Bukware (1932), Karambi (Burahya), Nyabukara (Burahya) Bweganju (Bunyaruguru), Kyenjojo (Mwenge), Matiri (Mwenge) and many others. He also helped in the building of Schools at Kammengo, Kitumba (both near Fort Portal), Kichenche (Kitagwenda) and Busungu (in Bwamba). When he died in 1950, another Muganda, Sheik, Salimu Kirimiro was sent to Toro to act as Kadhi and teacher.

According to Hassan Kamihanda, the first Batoro to

become Muslims were converted in Buganda. When Baganda Muslims invaded Toro, they captured a number of Batoro and took them to Buganda. When peace and calm had been restored to Uganda through the establishment of Colonial rule, Kasagama repatriated all the Batoro from Buganda. Some of these Batoro included Hassan Kamihanda himself; Sowedu Manigeeka of Birenga in Mwenge; Saidi Nyakamura, of Kigarama Gombolola Mut. I Burahya; Maluzuku Kihika of Rwoyimba in Bunyangabo and many others.

As the statistics in the introduction show, there are not very many Muslims in Toro. Part of this is explainable in the lack of Muslim chiefs who would have used their influence to bring numbers to their faith. Lists of chiefs in Toro of the years round 1906 show an obvious absence of Muslims. All senior members of the royal family, the Ssaza chiefs and others prominent men were Christians. One interesting case of a chief who became a Muslim was that of Samwiri (later Ramazani) Kwitakulimuki, the Ssekibobo of Kibale. When the D. C. reported the matter to the Commissioner, the latter replied that:

the Commissioner attaches some importance to the political significance of changes of religion such as that alluded to and though he remembers that prior to his visit to Toro, the Ssekibobo was supposed to have threatened to act as he has . . . he wishes you to give the matter further consideration and report more fully upon the circumstances. It is needless to say that your subject is a delicate one, to be treated with great discretion.<sup>63</sup>

The D. C. reported that Ssekibobo changed his religion because he owed lots of money to some Muslim traders who



promised to cancel them if he became a Muslim and he also wanted to take a second woman as wife. He felt that though the Mohammedans had gained a political victory, he did not think his example would be followed by others.<sup>64</sup> He was right for very few chiefs in Toro became Muslims. It is true people like Bulaafa Ntinako of Kitagwenda was Ssabaddu in Kichenche; Abdalla Ssabagabo of Rwamwanja was chief in Kibaale, Bulaimu Kitalikibi was Gombolola chief of Kasule in Kyaka and Bulaimu Gamyuka chief of Nyamungura but all these were minor (sub-county) chiefs. Thus like in many other districts Islam in Toro remained a religion of the minority, often an immigrant one.

#### KIGEZI

Kigezi, like Karamoja, has very few Muslims (i.e. less than one percent of its population) due to a number of reasons--one, the District lies away from the main routes which the Muslim coastal traders took. Two, it lacks elephants in great numbers which would have attracted early Muslim ivory traders. Three, its geographical nature was such that a central autocratic authoritative ruler who could impose his will on the population could not easily emerge. As it happened, the various groups living in independent valleys enjoyed a happy democratic anarchy. Thirdly, Kigezi was one of the last Districts to be embraced by effective colonial administrations. This meant the delay of coming to the District of Muslims in form of traders,

askaris, government agents or soldiers. And finally, the people of Kigezi especially the Kiga who lived in valleys and hill sides each isolated from the other by mountains like the Greeks of old, were very attached to their traditional way of life. It is true that the Kiga had no central authority but the family, and to some extent, the kinship unit, was the medium of this attachment. Most of the members of a family lived in one large homestead composed of several huts clustered together in one or more compounds. The head of the family or unit provided the guidelines of behavior. Tradition and customs were kept not as an end in themselves but as a means to ensure the survival of the community. When Islam came to Uganda in the early 1880's, the people of Kigezi were still very much attached to their traditions. This trend continued up and after 1914 when colonial rule was established. As I said earlier, the government had to use force to break down some of the traditional beliefs. Islam without this power to enforce, or government positions to entice people, could not easily penetrate into Kigezi.

It is true that Emin with Stuihimann with many coastal traders visited Makobore in Rujumbura but they left little impact.<sup>65</sup> It was however not till the coming of the Kivu missionaries and the establishment of colonial rule that Muslims who were willing to impart their religion on to others came. The majority of these were Sudanese soldiers but the Baganda subordinates seem to have left a

lasting mark. Probably the most known of these agents was Hassan Ssebowa who came to Kigezi in 1909, or thereabout.<sup>66</sup>

According to himself, he had been one of Mwanga's faithful pages and followed him till the latter was captured. Then he took service with a European (Bwana Monday) as a cook and followed him from station to station. Later he was recruited into the police force before finally becoming a station agent at Kabale. The District Commissioner J. E. Philipps at Kabale while writing a letter of commendation in 1930 on Hassan's retirement says:

station chief Hassan Ssebowa has spent his life time in loyal and exemplary service to the government. Together with (adviser) Abdalla Namunye, he is one of the very few remaining pioneers who bore the heat and the burden in this then wild and disputed country before Kigezi was a district or any civil station existed.<sup>67</sup>

It would seem that Ssebowa used his influence to recommend his friends to the administration for appointment as chiefs. Thus he claims that he recommended Abdalla Namunye and Silimani Ntangamalalo. After Ssebowa, many more Muslims like Muwallim Hamis (from Madagascar according to Hammani), Sheriff Ahmed who helped build the Kirigame mosque in Kabale, Abdalla Fanyere, Swahili, Indian and other traders came to Kigezi.

All the people we interviewed agreed that the first Munyakigezi to become a Muslim was Asumani Kanyoma, now over 90 years, of Rukungiri. He was followed by Muallim Iddi and then Juma who is the father of Abdu Juma Biramahire.

Kigezi had a number of Muslim chiefs and it is in

areas where they ruled that the largest number of Muslims is found. Abdalla Namunye, a Muganda agent was county chief of Bufumbira, Sulimani Ntangamalalo, another Muganda agent, was county chief in Kinkizi. They worked and died in Kigezi. Asumani Kanyoomwa and his son Juma were sub-county chiefs. Suliman Rushungu became sub-county chief of Bubaare. As Ngorogoza has pointed out, in areas where Muslims ruled especially Kinkizi and Bufumbira, a number of Muslims are found. But even then, there are very few Muslims in Kigezi.

#### BUSOGA

Present day Busoga like, to some extent, modern Ankole was made up of a number of independent principalities or kingdoms each with its own traditional ruler; though they all shared a common language. This disunity, and of course her nearness to the aggressive Buganda, made Busoga a fertile raiding ground for the Baganda whose economic philosophy was robbery and the massacre of others.

In many ways, Busoga was, like Buganda, ready to receive external ideas and beliefs. First her nearness to Buganda meant that cultural communication and exchange between the two societies were possible. Second, due to many wars between the two peoples, there was a constant crossing of the Nile from Busoga to Buganda and vice versa. This meant that many of the people who came into Buganda realized how changes in beliefs and traditions could take place

without endangering the survival of the community. Furthermore, Busoga had been invaded for generations by various peoples like the Luo, the Bunyoro, the Bakedi and the Baganda. Each wave of conquerors brought with it new customs and ways of doing things which were eventually incorporated in Kisoga way of life. The Basoga thus were accustomed, like the Baganda, to taking in new ideas and beliefs. It is no wonder therefore, that Islam has had much success, in comparison to other Districts, in Busoga. Up to this day any major change of attitude or philosophy in Buganda also affects Busoga, for example the NAAM movement divided Basoga Muslims on the same lines as those in Buganda.

As in Buganda, the first Muslims to come to Busoga were Arabs from the East African coast. Their number must have been very small for the Kabaka of Buganda was jealous of allowing these foreign traders to visit other areas once they reached his court let alone to Busoga which the Baganda saw as their hunting ground. The route through Masailand was, anyway, difficult. Around 1856-7, just after Suna's death, an Arab Caravan passed through Masailand from the coast and traversed through Busoga. But it was turned back at the borders of Buganda.<sup>68</sup> The Baganda had a tradition that the conqueror of their country would come through Busoga, their "back door"--a belief that became true in 1966. Another Arab we hear of in Busoga was Choli who led Mutesa's expedition to Busoga before 1880 or thereabouts.<sup>69</sup>

In 1885 Masudi, another Arab led a Baganda expedition into Busoga. He was still in the area quelling "rebellions" when Hannington arrived in Busoga.<sup>70</sup> Despite this however, there seems to be little evidence that these Arabs ever preached Islam in the area.

The next, and probably the greatest, wave of Muslims to come to Busoga were the baganda Muslim refugees who came in the period 1889-1897. Luboga has aptly commented about the activities of Ali Lwanga who brought "Mohammedanism" in Bulamogi and gained influence over the Basoga because he knew Swahili, how to make soap, mend guns, was very generous and became very influential in the area.<sup>71</sup> Judging by the success that attended them, many other Baganda Muslim refugees must have had these skills that endeared them to the local people. Lwanga eventually became an interpreter to the D. C. and in his later life settled down as a county-chief.<sup>72</sup> As he married "hundreds of women" and entertained lots of people at his home, he did a lot to popularize Islam in Busoga. It is generally agreed that the following Baganda Muslim refugees brought Islam to the following areas in Busoga.<sup>73</sup>

Bulamogi: Ali Lwanga, Yusufu Kitungulu.

Bugweri: Yusufu Luzige, Kamadi Lugumba, Sserunkuma, Luswaswa.

Busiki: Adamu Kironde, Katetemera.

Luwuka: Salimu Bwagu.

Kugulu: Hassan.

Those of other areas like Bunya, Bugabula and others have been forgotten and little evidence is obtainable. Their Islamizing activities went as far as involving themselves in politics, converting chiefs and joining in local quarrels as we shall see in Bugweri.

In Busoga, as well as in many parts of Uganda, circumcision is regarded as the gate to Islam. When recording the first Basoga converts to the religion, therefore, one takes the list of the first Basoga to be circumcised as the first Muslims in the area. These were:

Kugulu: Sinaani Waiswa Wakinankali, Musa Kikulubiri and Hassan.

Bugweri: Menhya Munulo, Ali Kabodhe, Bulaimu Mpalakha, Ziyadi Kalenzi, Adamu Bwire.

Bukooli: Abdalla Wallangalira, Ziyadi Makaya.

Bunya: Yusufu Baliita, Muhamadi Kayenga.

Busiki: Musa Kigumba, Yubu Mukonte.

Bulamogi: Salimu; Juma Swaga.

Bugabula: Yusufu Bifamengo, Musa Katalo.

Most of these people were circumcised before 1900. Although their knowledge of Islam was very minimal, many of them were "fanatical" believers as the example of Munulo will show.

Thus, despite the desire of the missionaries supported by government officials, to exclude Islam from Busoga, the religion of the prophet made a slow but steady headway into the area carried by Baganda Muslims. Bishop Tucker, and indeed all succeeding Bishops, appealed to the government to

keep Mohammedanism out of Busoga.<sup>74</sup> The governor agreed that ~~Islam should be kept into the Sudan and Uganda preserved~~ as a bulwark to spread Christianity all over central Africa. He added that it was a government policy to keep Mohammedanism out of Busoga. Any Muslim chief who tried to use his influence to spread Islam was to be dealt with very severely. But as experience and history has shown, it is very hard for the government to control the inner feelings of the private lives of individuals. Government desire to control the spread of Islam into Busoga failed. Busoga has one of the highest percentages of Muslims in Uganda. In Bugweri for example, the Muslims form over 70% of the population.

Busoga also had a number of Muslim chiefs whose influence must have been advantageous to Islam. It is reported that in 1899 about thirty chiefs in Busoga were converted to Islam.<sup>75</sup> When Semei Kakungulu was appointed "practically paramount chief of Busoga" he came with many Muslims.<sup>76</sup> Probably this was what the Christian missionaries referred to as "a remarkable Mohammedan movement which overrun the country. . . ." <sup>77</sup> Yusufu Baliita, Ali Lwanga, Abdalla Munawa, Salimu Siko became county chiefs at different times and places in Busoga. The missionaries realizing the influence of chiefs complained that ". . . the larger number of those in authority in Usoga are, or were, till quite recently, also Mohammedans."<sup>78</sup> Usually people followed the religion of their chief especially hereditary chiefs for whom people's allegiance was well cemented. In case of



Busoga, the single chief who contributed most to the spread of Islam in the District was Munulo, the Menhya (hereditary ruler) of Bugweri principality. His family claimed descent from Mukama who is supposed to have come from Bunyoro long time ago with his sons Kakaire, Okali, and Ngobi Lugwa and settled in Busoga. Before Munulo came to power, Muslim Arabs had come to Bugweri and visited his grandfather, Kiyuba. They sold him various articles such as cloths, beads and other merchandise. In the short reign of Munulo's father, Naigambi (1893-6) many more Muslims in form of Baganda refugees came to Bugweri. Some of them were Yusufu Luzige. Kasooli (who was a mu'allim), Ali Lwanga and Sadala (who was actually a Swahili).

After the death of his brother, Munulo became the Menhya and was converted to Islam around 1896. Yusufu Luzige, one of the Baganda refugees at the Menhya's court at Mulanga circumcised him. Munulo's example was followed by his faithful followers namely Adam Bwire, Ziyadi Kalenzi, Abdul Walangalira who soon became Muslims. The reasons that made Munulo convert to Islam so quickly after his ascendancy to power are rather obscure. But I think his desire, as a very young man, to throw away the chains of tradition that tied his hands in the use of power by sharing it with his uncles, brothers and kinsmen must have contributed to his conversion. In Islam he saw a doctrine that would rid him of all the traditional ties and respect for his elders (his uncles especially) with whom he shared power. The desire

to get trade goods and to be on good terms with the Muslim traders may also have contributed to his decision. But the disorganized state of the traditional beliefs and way of life of the people of Bugweri, as Gwanjaye has pointed out must have been the major factor in giving Munulo freedom of action to adopt Islam.<sup>79</sup> He reports that traditional beliefs in Bugweri were in a chaotic state; the gods (through their human mediums) were often at war with one another and could not perform their duties properly. Moreover, the coming of foreign goods and ideas was slowly weakening the hold of traditional beliefs on society. The coming of Islam that was more organized, therefore, gave the ruler and people of Bugweri an alternative belief to what they had.

Opposition to his conversion and eventually his desire of forcing Islam on to everyone came from his many uncles and brothers. They rightly realized that by adopting Islam, the Menhya would claim new powers under the umbrella of Islam that would reduce their freedom of action that they had in the feudal past. Moreover, they had tradition and custom to defend their case. They pointed out that Islam contradicted their burial custom. According to the Muslims, the dead body must face Mecca when buried. But according to the people of Bugweri, the dead must be faced towards Bunyoro where their ancestors came from. Moreover, the so called Islamic rite of circumcision would cause a ruler to shed his blood which would automatically disqualify him as Menhya of Bugweri. His brothers and uncles led by Naigambi, Muwaabe,

Bugoyo, Buvelebuto, Kiyemba, Nalugoda, Ntende, Lugodha and Nkolo rebelled by refusing to pay allegiance to him and working on government projects.

However, before Munulo used force, he reported the rebellion of his subordinates to Grant, the District Commissioner Busoga who was stationed at Bukaleeba, that they had refused to work for him. Grant, through his interpreter, Salim Bwagu (a Muslim) told Munulo to bring the rebels to trial. Grant meant that either Munulo should set up a court and try his sub-chiefs first or he should bring them to Bukaleeba to be tried. But probably through the difficulty of interpretation, Munulo understood it differently. In "Luganda" and indeed many Uganda languages "to bring to trial" means to "mete out justice" i.e. to punish. Thus when Munulo returned home he started attacking his chiefs, burning and looting their enclosures. Only Mukama escaped Munulo's wrath for the former allowed his son, Dhakaba to become a Muslim and pleaded that he was too old to undergo circumcision. Muwaabe who had agreed to give up one of his sons to Islam was later attacked for changing his mind. Munulo burnt Muwaabe's home at Buvelebuto. A lot of property and life were destroyed in Munulo's jihad in Bugweri.

When Grant heard the news, he summoned Munulo to Bukaleeba. In defending himself, Munulo replied that by attacking his subordinates, he was merely carrying out the District Commissioner's orders. Grant sent Munulo and his lieutenants Nabwiso, Zayidi Kalenzi, Adamu Bwire, Watangalira,

Luzige, Kasooli, etc. to prison. However, about a week before the end of their prison period, the Nubian (Sudanese) soldiers at Bukaleeba mutinied killing Thruston, Scott, Major MacDonald and Pilkington. They released all the prisoners and promised Munulo not only to restore him as ruler of Bugweri but king of all Busoga.<sup>80</sup> He was glad to go back to Mulanga, his capital. All the Muslims in Busoga fought on the side of the Sudanese troops. But the Nubians were soon overcome and Munulo was re-arrested, convicted as a rebel and exiled to Entebbe in 1899. Here he was promised that if he renounced Islam, he would be made Menhya again but he refused. But so many Basoga went to see him at Entebbe that it was considered advisable to transfer him to Kenya where he died of smallpox in 1900.

Probably due to the traditional attachment and loyalty the people owed to their ruler and also the heroic life of Munulo, Islam became very popular in Bugweri after the death of Munulo. All but two of Mukama's sons such as Dhakaba, Kiswiriri, Menha, Kirunda, etc. became Muslims. Muwaabe allowed his children to become Muslims. Their example was followed up by the common people to such an extent that Bugweri is now over sixty percent Muslim.

Many of the early Muslims in Busoga observed Islam strictly. They built mosques and fasted the month of Ramadhan. Probably the first mosque built in Busoga was at Mulanga in Munulo's court and at Bukaleeba in the barracks that housed the Sudanese troops. But little indications

remain to show us where they once stood. Kawete mosque in Kigulu was probably the first mosque of a semi or permanent nature to be built in Busoga. The religious teachers who taught Islam in Busoga came mainly from Buganda. Ibrahim Muyinda went to Busoga in 1915 to be followed by Juma Begulumye, Adamu Kakeeto, Amiri Luwalala, etc. The first Musoga teacher of note was the late Sheik Juma Waiswa. He was made a Sheik in 1947 by Swaibu Ssemakula. There are a number of Koran Schools in Busoga to which many Muslim students go; the most important ones being Buwoya in Bugweri and another at Iganga. The playing of Matali (duffs) has reached a very sophisticated level in Busoga.

#### BUKEDI

In this text Bukedi is referred to as a Geographical area covering the present day Districts of Sebei, Bugishu and Bukedi proper. It would seem that the people of this area were well acquainted with Swahili culture long before 1899. Probably a few Arab and Swahili traders visited this area before that date. The first preachers of Islam best remembered by the local people to have come in this area were Sadala and Ibrahim Murogo.<sup>81</sup> They came in this area before 1899. When religious wars raged in Buganda, many Baganda Muslims run into the Bukedi area for security. The best remembered in this area were Abdalla Katongole and Adamu Bitendo.

However, real Islamic influence came to this area in the period 1899-1902 with the British/Baganda occupations

of Bukedi. As we saw earlier, many of Kakungulu's retinue of chiefs, servants and clerks were Muslims. The positions they occupied and the places where they worked have been discussed already and it will be only repetitions to give them again. When Kakungulu left Bukedi, his regime or system was bureaucratized into permanent salaried officials that exerted a great amount of influence on the local population. The names of Jafali Mayanja, Sale Lule, Abdalla Makubire, Yusufu Byakuno, Salimu Mbogo and Silimani Ddamulira, are still well remembered in this area.

From about 1916, Islam in Bukedi made a steadily quick impressive progress. The Bukedi Annual Reports complained that:

Mohammedanism is making considerable progress especially in Bugishu. A number of plots for mosques under the Land Allotment Scheme sanctioned by the Secretary of State, have been selected.<sup>82</sup>

Out of the 66 prominent chiefs in the District in the year 1916-7, 9 were Muslims, 5 Protestants, 2 Catholics, 5 Malakites and 45 pagans. Probably this advantage was due to the fact that circumcision which was an obstacle to Islam in the rest of Uganda was not a problem in parts of Bukedi. The Bagishu by tradition circumcise. But as from 1920 onwards Islamic progress slowed down considerably. The Christian missionaries built the Schools and the hospitals which the Muslims could not. By 1945, there were very few Muslims in the area.

## TESO

Like in Bukedi, Islamic influence first penetrated into Teso with the imposition of foreign rule in the period 1896-1927. This was the period in which the British through their Baganda agents subdued the people of Teso. Before that, as Emwanu has written, the Iteso were very hostile to foreigners.<sup>83</sup> According to Sheik Muhammad Said of Kumi, the first Muslims to preach in Teso were Yusufu, Umar and Amir Lutwaama.<sup>84</sup> All of them were Baganda sub-imperialists. Documentary evidence also shows that many of the Baganda sub-imperialists were Muslims. Emwanu points out that at the battle of Opega in 1896 in which the Iteso resisted the Baganda very bravely, two of the three leaders on the Baganda side were Muslims namely Arajabu Sabakaki and Jafali Mayanja. By 1913, there were still Baganda Muslim agents ruling in Teso. Thus Asumani was at Tiriri, Ibrahimu Mpirigi at Koboi, Yunus Kagwa at Nariama, Adamu Mukasa at Abella and Hamis at Kamoda.<sup>85</sup> Little if any, of their Islamizing activities have passed to us.

On the whole, however, Islam was and is not, very popular with the people of Teso. As one missionary pointed out:

Islam seems to have but little attraction for the Teso people, in spite of the prevalence of polygamy. Even the chiefs hold aloof from Mohammedanism although many of them have large numbers of wives; one who died recently left 119 as part of his estate. . . .<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, as Islam did not have missionaries, there was nobody to propagate their message. As we already noted, people

adopted religions, not necessarily for their "truth" but also, and probably more importantly, for the practical advantage to be derived from those religions on this earth. In Teso the Christian missionaries used methods that were far superior to those employed by the Muslims for gaining converts. One missionary explained their position thus:

. . . this last principle has been kept in view from the beginning in the Teso District. Chiefs have been encouraged to bring to us their damaged cycles and their injured persons, to send to us their sick dependants and other lame watches; the aim has always been to get the people to look to us for anything and everything and so be the more ready to accept our religious teaching.<sup>87</sup>

Hospitals and Schools were built in population centers to which hundreds went. For the Muslims, all they could promise was a far distant vague hope of going to the heavenly paradise after death.

#### KARAMOJA

Muslim influence first came into this remote District of Uganda through Swahili ivory traders probably before 1900. They came to Karamoja "via Elgon" i.e. through Bukedi and hence from Kenya.<sup>88</sup> They were so used to the area that W.D.R. Bell who visited Karamoja on a sporting expedition in 1903 from Mumia's was shown around at Manimani by these Muslim Swahilis.<sup>89</sup> Incidents of Swahilis raiding Turkan and vice-versa are often written about by early administrators of Karamoja. In fact Mbale owed its original existence as a trading, center to the Karamoja trade in ivory. The large community of Swahilis found at Mbale between 1903-4 lived



and used to thrive on these trading ventures.<sup>90</sup> Within Karamoja, the Swahilis operated in small trading centers such as Kilimi, Manimani, Turkwali and Moroto.<sup>91</sup> It is almost certain that these traders, unlike their counterpart in Buganda, never preached Islam. As statistics show, there are very few Muslims in Karamoja.

But for almost a quarter of a century, Islam was the only world religion claiming a presence of some sort in the District, though the adherents were foreigners. The British administration, probably for reasons of security had closed Karamoja to missionaries. Around 1922, however, the C.M.S. began to press the administration to open up the District to missionaries. The Provincial Commissioner wrote to the chief secretary on 30th November, 1923 recommending the opening of the District to the missionaries for:

The District and the people have now been surveyed and the work of missions would be advantageous in all respects. There is moreover, a very strong Mohammedan influence in the District which needs some counter influence. All the five agents, all the shopkeepers and all the First Class Sergeants of the Uganda Police Unit are Mohammedans and to prevent all the chiefs becoming proselytized, I consider that the District should be opened to other missionary influence.<sup>92</sup>

The chief secretary agreed and missionaries were eventually allowed in Karamoja. Unlike the Muslims, the missionaries preached directly to the Karamajong whereas Islam remained a religion of government and commercial foreign employees. It never penetrated to the local indigeneous people till the present day. True there are a few mosques here and there but there are very few Karamajong Muslims.

## ACHOLI --LANGO AREA

The religious impact of foreign Muslims people on the indigenous inhabitants of this area remain to be done. Unfortunately, I was not able to physically do field work in either Acholi or Lango for understandable reasons. However, the activities of Muslim people who came from the North in this area have been recorded by Baker and Emin and fully discussed by Gray and Atkison. According to Atkison, the influence of Muslims traders who came from the North into what is now Acholi and parts of Lango is divisible into two periods. I must point it out, however, that they were not only "Arabs" but were composed of a good number of Turks, Maltese, Syrians and Greeks who might have been Arabised. The first period is that of adventurous ivory and slave traders from the early 1850 to 1872 known to the Acholi as Kutoria.<sup>93</sup> The second phase is the period of the rule of the agents of the Khedive of Egypt who ruled this area as part of the "Equatoria Province" of the Khedive's African Empire, from 1872 to 1888.

Muslim traders from the North (Egypt and the Nilotic Sudan) began to venture out more up the Nile after the death of Muhammadi Ali in 1849. In his lifetime he had imposed a government monopoly on the trade of these areas and no private expeditions were arranged. After his death, however, private adventures began to come up the Nile for gold and ivory but also took slaves. By the 1850's these Muslim adventurers had reached Atyak, the most northerly Acholi

state.<sup>94</sup> As Acholi political system was based on clans and or, independent principalities, these traders exploited the inter-clan disunity for their advantage.<sup>95</sup> Crazzolora claims that the first Muslim slave traders came into Acholi at the request of Lobai, Rwtot of Atiak who wanted them to help him fight the Jo-Chau.<sup>96</sup> He concludes that "their establishment and stay in Acholiland was entirely based on the rivalries of the various chieftainships and their discords." Many of the slave traders are still very well remembered by the Acholi for example Ibrahim and Muhammad Wat-el-Mek.<sup>97</sup>

These Muslim adventurous slave traders were not left alone, for the Khedive of Egypt, Ismali, under the umbrella of abolishing the slave trade, an umbrella well used by others before him, decided to annex all these lands of the Upper Nile. Three European officials namely, Baker (1872-74), Gordon (1874-6) and Emin (1878-88) administered the Southern Provinces of the Khedive's Empire. Northern Uganda (including Bunyoro, Acholi, Lango, parts of West Nile etc.) were included in the Khedive's Equatorial Province. But as the area was very large, and as Egyptian or European personnel could not be easily obtained, these European agents used the former slave traders as soldiers and administrators. Sudanese Africans were also recruited into the army and the place they have, and are playing in Uganda's History is not yet finished. Gordon visited Acholi once and Emin three times only. This meant that the former slave traders were left much on their own to behave as they liked towards the

indigenous population. These soldiers were locally known as the Nubis. Due to their contact with Arabs, many of them had become Arabised.

Their main stations were at Patiko, Pabo, Foweira, Padibe, Pajule, Angoro, Patango, Palabek, Lira and Mt. Kalongo Parajok. From these stations they raided the surrounding areas for ivory, food and sometimes slaves. Their activities went as far as Lira, Lira Palwo and Aduk in Lango. However, due to internal resistance by the population they used to terrorize and the Mahdists revolts, the Nubis were eventually forced out of Acholi-Lango area. By 1884, Muhammad Ahmad the Mahdi had the situation in control in the Northern part of the Sudan. He had expelled the Egyptians and their agents. This meant that Emin who was governor of Equatoria Province was completely cut off. The Nubis who were in Acholi found that they no longer could get help from their masters in the North. At the same time, the population on which they preyed was getting bitter every day and making hit and run raids on them. In a combined attack under the leadership of Awich, the Acholi thoroughly routed the Nubis in 1888 at Akwaro. The Nubis left Acholi for the opposite bank. A remnant of them was removed from the vicinity of Acholi in 1894 by Thruston as we observed earlier.

Probably due to their ruinous behavior, these Muslims seem to have left little influence in the area. It is true some chiefs like Ogwok of Chau had become perfect Dongolese for this particular chief could speak Arabic, "sat and slept

on an ankreb and entertained his guests with coffee."<sup>98</sup>  
Rwot Kilimayo of Kiteng could speak Arabic fluently.<sup>99</sup> But  
there seems to be few important chiefs in the area who em-  
braced Islam. We only hear of Olal, the son of Rwot Okello  
Mwaka who "read" Islam and was named Ibrahim but apostatised  
to Christianity later on, becoming a chief of Bobi in 1914.<sup>100</sup>

The next Muslims to come to this area in great numbers were the Sudanese mutineers who crossed into Lango from Busoga and Bugerere in 1897 to take up common cause with Kabarega. When the latter was captured, they organized themselves in a company and began to raid in Acholi and Lango. Their leaders were Mulazim Farajadalla; Effendi Yuzbasha, Sergeant Major Risgalla Bushir, Sergeant Adul Fret who was the Sergeant-Major. In Lango, they were known as "Adu Fret's Black Turks." Major Delme'-Radcliffe who led the Lango Field Force in 1901 to curb their activities estimated that there were at least 103 mutineers supported by a large number of followers.<sup>101</sup> They established stations at the junction of Oloin and Toshi rivers, and at Modo about 20 miles from Foweira. Almost all of them were Muslims but they did not try to propagate their faith.

When colonial rule was fully established, more Muslims came into the area as either government employees or servants of government officers. For example Hamis bin Ali was employed in Acholi around 1900 by the government. He was later discharged and arrested for slave dealing.<sup>102</sup> Ali bin Salimu worked as an office boy at Gulu from 1912 to

1920 and had previously worked at Koba.<sup>103</sup> In 1912, Lira was selected as the administrative center for Lango and a few Muslims came with the cementation of British rule. As we saw in Chapter III, Baganda Muslim agents worked in this area. For example by 1911, Bulukani was at Olett, Yusufu was at Ngai, Ibrahim was at Nabieso and Dauda was at Chengere.<sup>104</sup> By 1914, there were a sufficiently large number of Muslims to make the government confirm Hamis bin Awaz of Kalaki in Kioga as Deputy Registrar under Section 4 of the Mohammedan Marriage and Divorce Ordinance (of 1906).<sup>105</sup> The D. C. was at this time worried about the number of Lango girls marrying Muslims.

On the whole, Islam has not been very popular in this area. It has, like in Ankole remained a religion of emigrants except that here instead of the Baganda the Muslims are Nubi (Sudanese), Swahilis and Arabs.

#### WEST NILE AND MADI

The county of Aringa in West Nile has more than 80% of its population Muslim and there are more than 30 Koran Schools.<sup>106</sup> Madi has an average percentage of thirty-five percent of its population Muslims. It could be said that the History of Islam in this area is also the History of the activities of the Nubis (former Sudanese troops). We discussed earlier how they came into Uganda, married local women and spread their religion amongst the people.

In three interviews I made in West Nile with Haji

Muwalimu Yusufu Nuhu of Yumbe, Gulum Beg Muhammad of the same place and Ahmad Kalifan of Arua, the same opinion was expressed.<sup>107</sup> Muwallim Yusufu Nuhu went on to add that when these former soldiers--or their descendants--were made chiefs by the British government, Islam spread even more. He particularly mentioned Fademulla Ali who, for a long time, was chief of Aringa.<sup>108</sup> This particular chief extended his favors to Muslims and selected as sub-chiefs members of his own religion. Another Muslim who ruled Aringa from 1947 was Fedemulla Murijan described by a European official as "a very intelligent man and a keen Mohammedan." Other Muslim chiefs in West Nile in 1919 were Juma Said who was a sub-chief in Offude County, Sokhair Murjan who was an interpreter at the D. C.'s office at Arua with lots of influence and Nurjan Ramadan.<sup>109</sup>

Gulam Beg Muhammed is of the opinion that Islamic teaching in the real sense did not begin till Sheik Muahammad Abdalla of Bombo visited the area. He stayed at Arua for nine years from where he visited various places teaching and preaching.

CHAPTER V: FOOTNOTES

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- <sup>2</sup>Dunbar, A. R. A History of Bunyoro-Kitara Nairobi, 1965, p. 95.
- <sup>3</sup>M. M. Edel. The Chiga of Western Uganda, Oxford, 1955.
- <sup>4</sup>Dunbar, A. R. Ibid., p. 108.
- <sup>5</sup>Welbourn, F. B. East African Christian, Nairobi, p. 61.
- <sup>6</sup>Mukasa Bakale bin Mayanja. Ebyafayo by'Entalo, Kampala, 1932 (Buganda Co-operative Society) p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup>Lubogo, Y. K. A History of Busoga. Jinja 1960, p. 21.
- <sup>8</sup>Juma Waiswa (d. 1970) in August 1969.
- <sup>9</sup>Sheik Hassimu Njalira, interview July 1969.
- <sup>10</sup>Furley, O. W. "Sudanese Troops in Uganda" in African Affairs, 58 No. 233 Oct. 1959, pp. 311-29.
- <sup>11</sup>Furley, O. W. "Kasagama of Toro" Uganda Journal XXV, No. 2, 1961.
- <sup>12</sup>Willis, J. J. Mengo Notes, 1906, p. 124.
- <sup>13</sup>Wamala, S. G. Life of Kakungulu, p. 201.
- <sup>14</sup>Interview on two separate occasions with Hassan Ssebowa  
(a) with Habib bin Salimu, 1968.  
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- <sup>16</sup>Morris, H. F. History of Ankole, Kampala 1962, (EALB) p. 36.



- <sup>17</sup> Willis, J. J. Mengo Notes, August 1906, p. 24.
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- <sup>20</sup> Wamala, S. G. Ibid., p. 43.
- <sup>21</sup> Entebbe Government Archives  
(a) Bunyoro A/12/1 1900-1901.  
(b) Toro Inward A/12/1902.
- <sup>22</sup> Entebbe Government Archives 741/1906.
- <sup>23</sup> S.M.P. 22/7 Native Agents, Entebbe Government Archives.
- <sup>24</sup> A 12/1/1900-1901 Entebbe Government Archives.
- <sup>25</sup> H. C. White to P. C. Western Province, 26 Jan. 1921 S.M.P. 6726, Entebbe Government Archives.
- <sup>26</sup> H. F. Morris. A History of Ankole (EALB), Kampala 1962 p. 14.  
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- <sup>27</sup> Lukyn-Williams, F. "Early Explorers in Ankole" in Uganda Journal Vol. 2 Jan. 1935.  
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- <sup>28</sup> Watson to Chief Secretary. Entebbe Government Archives SMP 149/1909.
- <sup>29</sup> Interview with Sheik M. Ssemugenyi of Isingiro in Sept. 1969.
- <sup>30</sup> Bamunoba Jerome in Dini na Milla Vol. 2 pp. 5-17.  
Katate and Kamungungunu. Ibid., Vol. II pp. 14-15.
- <sup>31</sup> H. F. Morris. Ibid., (1962) p. 36.
- <sup>32</sup> Acting Sub-Commissioner Western Region to H. M. Acting Commissioner 18th Jan. 1906 Entebbe Government Archives A 15 Vol. I/21.
- <sup>33</sup> D. Bagatira "Impact of Islam in Ibanda" Religious studies Occasional Paper No. 47, 1970.
- <sup>34</sup> Williams (M.A. Thesis) Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>35</sup>Cooper to Governor, 20th July 1920 Entebbe Government Archives S.M.P. 2071 II.

<sup>36</sup>Kabwejere, T. B. Soc; 50. "The growth of a Rural Trading Center in Ankole (Ishaka)" in M.I.S.R. at Makerere.

<sup>37</sup>Uzoigwe. "Kabarega's Abarusura; The Military Factor in Bunyoro" Makerere History Seminar 1968.

<sup>38</sup>Casti. Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>39</sup>Kiwanuka, M. S. Ph.D. Thesis (London) Vol. II p. 592.

<sup>40</sup>Baker, S. W. Ismailia Vol II (London) 1874 p. 253.

<sup>41</sup>Gray, Sir John M. "Kabarega's Embassy to the Mahdists" in Uganda Journal Vol. 19, No. 1 (1955) pp. 93-5.

<sup>42</sup>H. B. Thomas. "Mohammed Bbiri" Uganda Journal Vol. 24 No. 1, 1960 p. 124.

<sup>43</sup>Buligwanga. Ekitabo Ky'Ekika kye Mamba p. 12.  
 Apolo Kagwa. Ekitabo ky'Ekika ky'Ensenene p. 23.  
Ebifa mu Buganda, Nov. 1916 pp. 234-236.  
 Apolo Kagwa. "Ebyafa mu Mirembe gya Mukabya" in Ebifa pp. 2-7.

<sup>44</sup>Nyakatura, J. Abakama ba Bunyoro-Kitara p. 208.  
 Dunbar, R. History of Bunyoro-Kitara.  
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<sup>45</sup>Interview between Muhamud Kazimiraine and Haji Omar Kanyabuzaana of Ssaza Bugaya village Kigede in Bunyoro in August 1969. Mr. Muhamud Kazimiraine, a very good friend of mine did four interviews for me in Bunyoro using a questionnaire I had prepared and he sent me the results. Other interviews were with

(a) Twaha-Ali, a butcher of Gomb Busisi Ssaza, Bugahya, Box 23 Hoima, August 1969.

(b) Ausi Rwakaikara, then a Secretary-General of Bunyoro and a leading Muslim in the area; 1969.

(c) Karmaidin Shumshudin (Bohara) and Indian shop-keeper in Masindi, 1969.

<sup>46</sup>Uganda Notes June 1914 p. 132.

<sup>47</sup>Uganda Notes June 1913 p. 135.

<sup>48</sup>Rev. C. H. Ecob and H. Farthing in Mengo Notes Sept. 1900 p. 20.

<sup>49</sup>Lloyd in Mengo Notes Mar. 1901 p. 44.

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- 52 Rukidi. Ibid., p. 20.
- 53 Gomotoka. Makula VI, p. 2440-3.  
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- 59 Entebbe Government Archives especially.  
(a) Toro Annual Report 1911-12 S.M.P. No. 632 B.  
(b) Act. Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary  
of 11th Dec. 1911; S.M.P. 2099.  
(c) W. E. Jackson (ADC Toro) to Chief Secretary.
- 60 Rukidi. Ibid., p. 31.
- 61 Interview between  
(a) Hassan Kamihanda (105) of Bukware, Toro.  
(b) Sheik Ibrahimu Lubwaama (65) also of Bukware.  
(c) Nuwa Muhammadi of Kitumba and Father Michael  
Fitzgerald with A.B.K. Kasozi in June 1970.
- 62 Entebbe Government Archives S.M.P. 559 /B/ 1906.
- 63 G. W. W. to the Ag. Sub-Commissioner, Western  
Province 18th January 1904.  
Toro Correspondences in and Outwards; Entebbe  
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64. Ag. Sub-Commission, W. P. to Commissioner 16th February 1904 A 14 Vol. 5, 1900-1906. Entebbe Government Archives.

65. P. Ngologozza Kigezi N'abantu Bemwo (EALB), Kampala 1967 p. 55.

66. Interview between Hassan Ssebowa and Kate Parry of Kigezi High School together with A.B.K. Kasozi on Easter Sunday 1970. In two interviews which Habib bin Salim then a student at Makerere, and

(a) Muwallimu Hamani of Rushaki village two miles pm Kabale-Mbarara Rd.

(b) Muwallimu Iddi of the same place there was agreement that Hassan was the pioneer Muslim in Kigezi.

67. Letter written on 30th April 1930 by the D. C. J. E. Philipps on behalf of Ssebowa.

68. Speke. Journal p. 187.

69. Kagwa, A. Basekabaka p. 134.

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73. This information is condensed as a result of wisdom obtained from the interviews with the following people:

I. Sheik Juma Waiswa of Bugembe on 25th August 1969 (he died 1970). He was 70.

II. Salimu Wandera, Son of Menhya Munulo of Bugweri on 12th Oct. 1969. He is over 65 years of age.

III. Ausi Mukama Kirunda, (71) on 12th October 1969.

IV. Astanley Kasuwa (72) of Nakibembe Bugweri on 12/10/69.

V. Abu Bakr Kibeedi (41) of Buwaabe, Bugweri on 12/10/69.

IV. Ali Kirunda-Kivejinja (34) of Buwabe Bugweri on 12/10/69.

74. Tucker to Johnston, Dec. 17th 1900 Entebbe Government Archives 11/1. Mengo Notes of 1911 pp. 342-3 Johnston to Tucker Entebbe Government Archives A 23.

75. C. M. S. Proceedings, 1900 p. 144.

76. Mengo Notes August 1906 p. 124.

- 77 C. M. S. Proceedings 1900-1 p. 144.
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- 79 Y. B. Gwanjaye in a B. A. final year paper entitled "Islam in Bugweri" for Makerere History Dept. May 1970.
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- 81 Interview with Sheik Haji Hassim Njalira of Nabigonda, Kachonga, Bunyole Bukedi on 14th Sept. 1969 and Sheik Ahmad Swale of Kaptere Bukedi.
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- <sup>95</sup>Bere. "outline of Acholi History" Uganda Journal II (1947) p. 3.
- <sup>96</sup>Crazzorola. Ibid., (1954) p. 241.
- <sup>97</sup>L. Okech. Tekwaro ki ker Lobo Acholi Kampala (1953) Chapter II.
- <sup>98</sup>Emin Pasha. "Extracts IV p. 132.
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- <sup>100</sup>T. Watson. Education in Uganda Ph.D.. Thesis (E.A.) 1969 pp. 449-50.
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- <sup>103</sup>H. C. White (D. C. Gulu) to P. C. Western Province 26th Jan., 1921 S.M.P. 6726 Entebbe Government Archives.
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- <sup>106</sup>J. S. Trimingham. Islam in East Africa Oxford at the Clarendon Press (1964) p. 49.
- <sup>107</sup>Interviews in April, 1968. I am grateful for the Makerere Professor of Religious Studies at the time who made funds available for me to undertake the enterprise.
- <sup>108</sup>See also Native Affairs; West Nile Dist.-Unrest in Arua District 5592; Entebbe Government Archives.
- <sup>109</sup>5592 Native Affairs; Entebbe Government Archives. Also E. C. Lanning, "Sultan Fademulla of Aringa" Uganda Journal Vol. 18 No. 2 (Sept., 1954) pp. 178-180.

## CHAPTER VI

### PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS CONSOLIDATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS 1900-1945

In the period 1900-1945, Islam did not only expand in numbers of converts but also consolidated itself as a religion in the hearts, and to some extent, in the daily lives of its adherents. The numbers of the people who became Muslims were, of course, dwarfed by those who were converted to Christianity. But for the few who became Muslims a hard core of believing indigenous converts awaited them. These faithful believers adopted certain aspects of Islam and integrated them in their religious practices in a way that gave Ugandan Islam a local touch. However, the failure of the Uganda Muslims to unite under one central organization slowed down the progress and expansion of their community.

Muslim expansion in numbers did not grow as fast as it would have been if the Muslims had won the war. But they made some significant gains. In Buganda alone, according to the census conducted by chiefs, Muslims rose from 58,000 in 1911 to 71,000 in 1921. There was a decline in 1931 when the reported number of Muslims was only 68,000 but this was made up for in the next twenty years. By 1950, the number of Muslims in Buganda had trebled to 180,000. Four

years later in 1954, the latter figure had almost doubled to 288,000. I must point it out however that the estimates given by chiefs were not very accurate but unfortunately no better statistics are available. This steady increase amongst Muslims was caused by a number of factors. Firstly, the traditional way of life that had previously hindered the conversion of African peoples to foreign beliefs and ideas was already weak and in some aspects completely destroyed. When I say that the traditional way of life had been weakened, I do not mean that there were no aspects of traditional thought, customs or behavior left. Indeed there were and there still are many aspects of traditional way of life that survive to this day. What I mean is that the traditional set up, traditional values, and way of life as an integrated whole had ceased to be the value system, the criterion, the reference or the "ultimate concern" upon which men based their actions. Before the coming of foreign religions as we observed earlier, men lived in an environment that was supposed to conform to the way in which they understood the cosmos. Any break from such a way of living, it was thought, would bring untold and repeated catastrophes to society such as the endless dying of all children, failure of the coming of rain, the appearance of epidemics and other calamities. For that reason men made sure that they conformed to the ways of their ancestors by walking tightly within the prescribed bounds of traditional laws. But after their conversion to foreign religions Ugandans justified their



actions on the basis and values of their newly acquired religions. Islam or Christianity became the legal system or constitution of their daily lives. Henceforth most of the actions an individual did had to fall within the legal bounds of the new religion he followed. If there were aspects of traditional life that conflicted with the new religion but which a person wanted to utilize, he used them in the dark usually at the back of his house--an indication of how traditional religion had been pushed in the background. Even the so-called "traditional diehards" thought it prudent to take on a Christian or a Muslim name and hide under the protection of either of each of the latter while they practiced--with doubts--their traditional religions in secret. Traditional religions, therefore, no longer controlled the minds of men in the way they had formerly done. As a result, foreign religions gained more adherents in this period than at any other period in the history of this country. Islam, a defeated religion, torn asunder by perennial internal conflicts, with no central organization, did not get as many converts as might have been the case. But a sufficient number of people, in view of the obstacles to the path of Islam, followed the crescent. This was especially the case between 1950-1955 when the increase in conversion to Islam exceeded that of any other religion. According to Gee, the Muslims increased by 15%, the Roman Catholics by 5% and the Protestants by 4% in the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, Asian Muslims who were better organized and had more financial power than the Africans, helped their black co-religionists in the propagation of Islam. They did this in many ways. They gave money and materials to African Muslims either directly or by financing viable projects such as schools, mosques and buildings. As early as the 1910's, Alidina Visram used to bring "bags" of money to African mosques to help poor Muslims and also to finance other projects.<sup>2</sup> In 1945, H. H. The Aga Khan founded the East African Muslim Welfare Society for all Muslims in the region. He appealed to

Muslims of all sections to look upon this society as a Pan-Islamic Brotherhood working especially for the upliftment of African Muslims and the encouragement of mission efforts for the expansion of Islam to the African population.<sup>3</sup>

He gave a general offer to African Muslims that to every shilling they collected towards the building of schools, mosques, social centers or for scholarships, he would give another shilling or the "shilling to shilling policy" as it is popularly known. Between the single year 1945-6 the society gave 983,714/56 and 1,253,410/85 towards the building of mosques and schools in Uganda alone. By 1956, the society had donated over six million shillings. Asian Muslims also helped African Muslims in various technical fields in which Africans were unable or unqualified to work. In education, they helped to run and supervise schools. Ramadhan Gava reported to the Muslim Students' Association that Asian Muslims were supervising schools at Mbale, Jinja,

Soroti, Lira and Fort Portal. One of the most known Asian supervisor of African schools was Khaderboy in the Eastern Region. In this and other ways, Asian Muslims helped to make the expansion of Islam possible.

Thirdly, the foundation of the Uganda Muslim Education Association in 1944, a single organization that built and administered Muslim secular schools helped Islam in many ways. It made the creation of a Muslim intelligentsia brought up in an Islamic environment possible. It was these young Muslims educated in these schools that spoke for their coreligionists at the time before independence and helped to stop the coming into power of a supposedly anti-Islamic party. It also made parents, especially pagan parents whose children were the targets of competition for proselytization, realize that it was possible to have western education without becoming a Christian. Henceforth Muslims began to infiltrate the civil service from which they had, in effect, been excluded.

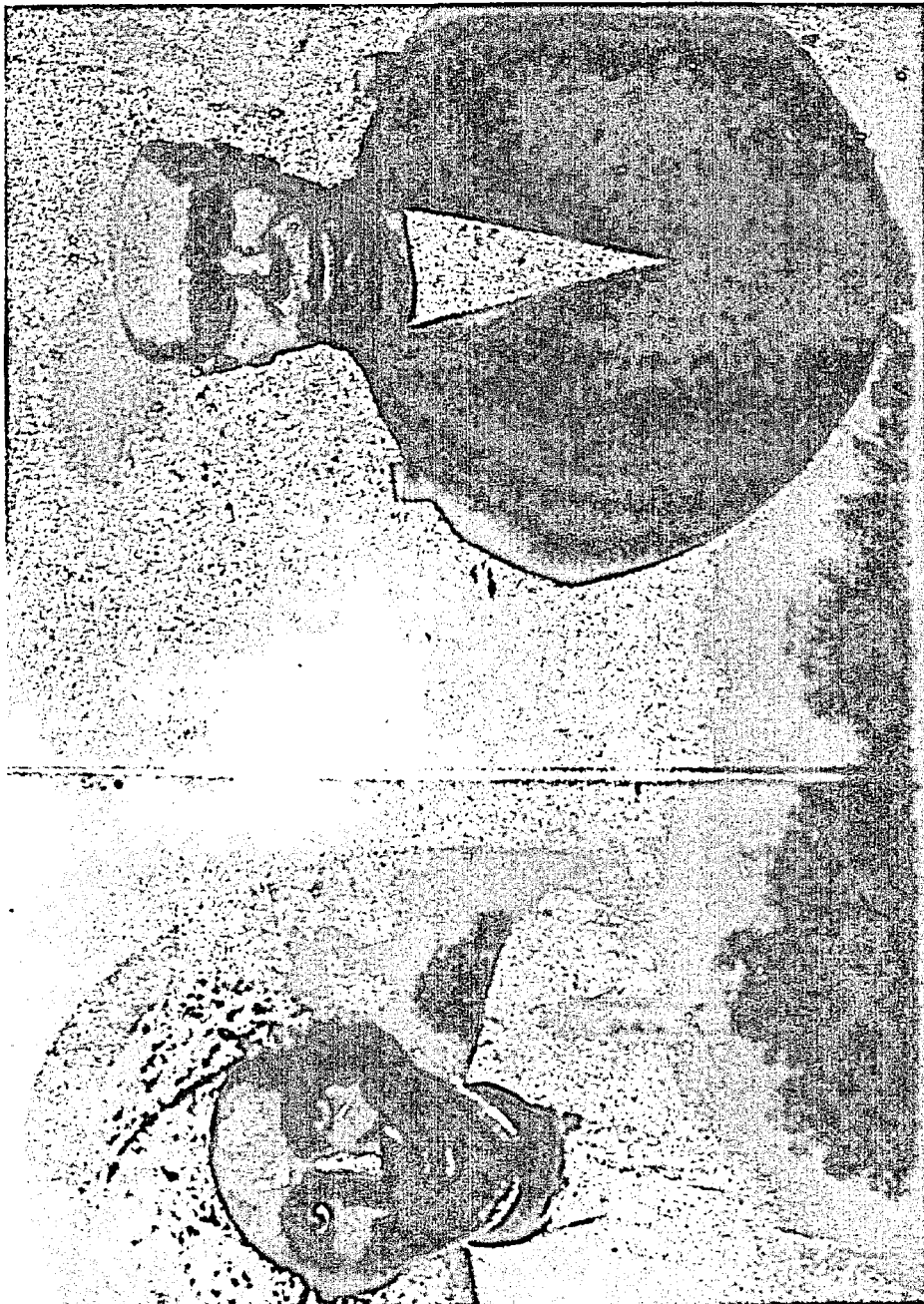
Finally, the involvement by Muslims in trade and commerce, especially as retailers, butchers and transporters, gave Uganda Muslims money with which to fight other disadvantages thrust upon them. Till recently most of the petty trade in Uganda has been in the hands of African Muslims while the higher type (that is wholesale, import and export plus manufacturing) was in the hands of Asians. However, due to lack of sufficient educated men, African Muslims are not likely to succeed in either the manufacturing or the

import-export sector of industry. But that the possession of money helped Muslims expand their religion cannot be denied.

Although the Muslims had been defeated, humiliated and denied a place of social importance in their own country, they achieved a lot for Islam, especially in the religious sector. When they realized their defeat, Muslims turned inwards and consolidated Islam in their hearts. They did this by not only providing themselves with facilities that enabled them to fulfill the prescribed five pillars of Islam but also by integrating certain aspects of Islam such as Manlid an-Nabbi within their way of practicing Islam. The earliest of these facilities was the building of mosques for the daily and Friday salat. Individual Muslims built, often out of their pockets, mosques in rural and urban centers where all went to pray. Wherever an administrative center sprung up in the country, a mosque was soon built by local Muslims. In 1916, the British officer at Mbale complained that a "number of plots for mosques" had been applied for by Muslims in Bukedi.<sup>4</sup> The mosque at Nakasero was built as early as the 1910's and served the Kampala urban area. The crowning achievement of mosque building are the two beautiful mosques, one at Kibuli built with the help of Asian Muslims and another at Wandegeya built from funds given by Haji Musa Kasule. Koran Schools were an offshoot of the mosque building efforts. These were instruction centers using mosques as classrooms to teach children the elements of

Islam. It was not until the late thirties that a Koran school with buildings of its own was founded at Lukalu in Butambala by Haji Juma Tomusange. Some of the money obtained from trade was used to fulfill the fifth pillar of Islam i.e. the pilgrimage to Mecca. The first group of people to go to Mecca from Uganda were two Asian Muslims, Khimji Bhanji and Sulemohammed Bhanji in 1910.<sup>5</sup> The first Ugandan Africans to go to Mecca were Sheik Abdalla Ssekimwanyi and Kibali who went in 1920. Ssekimwanyi returned safely but Kibali died there. The returned pilgrims are highly revered in Uganda and are thought to have acquired some form of Baraka (ability to give blessing) to those who remain behind. Moreover, the homecoming pilgrims brought back stories of the holy places, of great scholars they met, books that gave fresh ideas, and most important, confirmed the existence of the holy places about which they had read and heard. Thus Islam consolidated itself in the hearts of the few people who believed in it.

One of the aspects of Islam that has been fully integrated into Uganda Islamic practice and given a local dressing is Maulid an-Nabbi. Maulid is the celebration of the birth of anyone, particularly of the prophet Mohammed, Maulid an-Nabbi. These celebrations started when Muslims began to revere and regard the prophet as a supernatural being.<sup>6</sup> The Sufis, who have something like the cult of saints, might have influenced the history of the Maulid. It is believed that Muzzafar al-Dun Kokbur, the supposed



Haji Abdalla Ssekimwanyai

Haji Kibali

originator of the first public Maulid, was strongly influenced by the sufis. The Maulid an-Nabbi is on the 12th Rabi-al-awwal, the supposed birthday of the prophet. But Maulid means, to those who practice it, more than the date of birth. The places and scenes in which the prophet passed his earthly life have also assumed a high sanctity in their eyes. Such places include the Prophet's tomb at Medina, the house of his birth, al-Laila outside Mecca and even the mere mention of his name is supposed to bring some supernaturality in the area it is mentioned.

The celebration of the Maulid did not develop until fairly long after the death of the Prophet. As there is no monkery or hierarchy in Islam that confers sainthood, saints were and still are chosen by popular consent or by a particular cult. The result is that there were many saints, since their selection was, and is, not controlled. The Sufis had something akin to a saint cult. They often honored their devoted mystics with poetry and tomb visitations. Companions of Muhammed were also given elevated status. It was therefore natural that the Prophet should be honored by such celebrations.

At first, Maulid an-Nabbi was celebrated by a few individuals together with Maulids of other saints. But from 1905 onwards things began to change. The celebrations of Maulids became more and more common. The first popular Maulid was arranged by Malik Muzzafar al-Dun Kokburi, brother-in-law of Saladin who lived in Arbela, a city in

Upper Mesopotamia. From then on, Maulid celebrations spread throughout the Muslim world. However, on various occasions some extremely orthodox Muslims like the Wahhabis have opposed it firmly on the basis that it was "Mohammed worship," a thing the Prophet would never have permitted.

Though the Maulid ritual went through various transformations, certain elements remained basic. Some of these were the invocations to the Prophet's name, the celebration of various episodes in his life, songs, processions, chants, poems, sometimes the exchange of presents, public review and general feasting. The first Maulids were known for their extravagance. People from various places collected at Arbela where they were entertained with music, dancing, singing, and exhibitions. All businesses were closed and large numbers of animals were sacrificed a few days before the celebration. On the eve of the Maulid, the whole populace engaged in a torchlight procession through the town, and on the morning of the great day the multitudes assembled before Muzzafar. The troops in the town put on a grand procession, Muzzafar gave a speech and the crowd repaired to an enormous feast. These extravagant festivities spread to all parts of the Muslim world.

The celebration of Maulidi an-Nabbi filtered from the East African coast to this country in the early 1920's. The most popular Maulid read is the Maulid Barzanji. The first Maulid celebration to be officially observed took place in 1928 at the home of Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula at



Namasumbi.<sup>7</sup> An epidemic of some sort was devastating the country during that time and a group of Muslims, Swaibu Ssemakula, Muhammadi Lubowa, Sheik Muhammedi Nulu, Sheriff Ahmed and Swalihi Tegawooma decided to pray to the Almighty to thwart the calamity. Swaibu Ssemakula suggested to them that they should read the Maulid Barzanji and if possible celebrate it each year. They all agreed and in that year, 1928, on the 12th, Rabbi al-Awwal, the first Maulid was celebrated in Uganda. Many other leading Muslims welcomed the idea and started celebrating the Maulid.

The authorities at Kibuli, however, did not welcome the idea of sheiks congregating without the permission of the Muslim leaders. They reported to the civil administration that Maulids were prejudicial to law and order and that the instigating sheiks were preventing people from paying tax. It was a shock when Swaibu Ssemakula, Sheik Muhammed Nulu, Abdulhamani Mivule and Zaidi Katabala were arrested for the above crimes. Within a few hours, however, the government realized that the points at stake were religious and not criminal. They were therefore released. Their release was a triumph of Maulids in Uganda.

The Kibuli authorities recognized the celebrations in 1933. From then on Maulids have been celebrated in Uganda almost throughout the year. Samula-Kimuli complained that "the birth of the Prophet, Rabbi al-awwal is celebrated for more than six months, two months before 12th Rabbi al-awwal and two months after."<sup>8</sup> The first Maulid on the list is the

great gathering at Kibuli on the evening of the 12th. Muslims from all over Uganda collect on this projecting hill at about sunset. From there, they march in a long procession of cars, buses, motorcycles, bicycles and sometimes on foot through Kampala to a selected point--normally another mosque, say, Kawempe. From there they take another roundabout route back to Kibuli. This Maulid opened the season. It was an enormous undertaking, and great festivities went on. Samula Kimuli wrote that on one Maulid about ten thousand pound sterling were spent. This may be exaggerated, but a lot of feasting went on. The next Maulid was one celebrated at Kawempe (Jinja-Kawempe), about six miles from Kampala. This was followed by a Maulid for the Ssekabaka Kalema at Mmende at the place he was buried. After the Mmende celebration, all the sheiks entrusted with the responsibility of arranging Maulid in each District consulted the main office at Kibuli. The head of the Maulids up to 1965 was the late Sheik Muhammad Lubowa. He fixed the dates of the celebrations in such a way that the leader of the Muslims could attend at least one Maulid, though sometimes more, in each District.

At a Maulid, people gather outside a mosque or on a piece of open ground or near the house of a prominent person. They sit in rings of circles all facing an empty center or nucleus in order of their importance both in knowledge of religion and social status. All of them focus their attention on the open core where there is a burner on which an aromatic incense bought from Arab shops is periodically

poured. Like the divine fire of African kings, this fire is never allowed to "die" till the Maulid is over. Each person who attends the Maulid is supposed to drop at least a grain of incense on the fire. Before he does, he prays that he might own the world, chase away evil or get enough money to go to Mecca. God is supposed to listen more when the message is carried by the smoke from the incense. Also in this center space there is a table on which there are books like the Koran, Maulid Bhazanji, Arabic poetic and Qasid books. A platform for people to stand is sometimes, though not always, placed here for speakers to stand on. One or more bands of Matali (duffs or tamburines) usually sit near this focus of attention.

The Maulid begins with the reading of the First Chapter of the Qur'an, Sura Fatiha. This is recited seven times by everyone. Then one of the sheiks on the circle nearest the center reads the first chapter of Maulid Bhazanji. Those that are carried away with the gentle flow of the poetry recite the chapter in collaboration with the reader. Whenever the name of the prophet is mentioned, all the people burst in exclamations of praise of him by saying loudly, "Swallahllahu allaihi was Sallamma," ("May Allah preserve him and may the peace of Allah be upon him"), or whatever comes to their thought. When the reading of the first chapter is finished, the Matali drummers are asked to provide music. This is the first peak of the Maulid. Everyone rocks and rolls to the rhythm of the Matali including the sheiks.

Qasidahs in Arabic, sometimes Swahili songs, accompany the drums and the praise bestowed on the prophet in these songs knows no bounds. When sweat has overcome the temples of everyone, the music stops and reading of the second chapter starts. The process is repeated again and again but sometimes Maulid Bhazanji might be placed aside and a chapter in the Qur'an concerning the prophet might be read. Occasionally young students in Kanzu uniforms from a neighboring Qur'an school might be called in to recite a chapter of either a book or some religious lesson they have learned very well. When about four or more chapters have been read, a speaker who might be a sheik, a politician or a Christian visitor is called upon to address the gathering. When he sits down, the normal routine is continued.

The climax of the Maulid is reached when the verses describing the prophet's birth is reached. Everyone stands up and joins verbally in a chorus praise of the prophet. Whoever had the fortune to be reading when this stage was reached moves around the circles signing the prayer as he goes. But nowadays there are enough sheiks who know this section by heart, so they just recite it in a chorus. Some Muslim groups read other Maulids like Maulid Sharaf al-a<sup>na</sup>m, Simt ad-Durai and others, but Bhazanji seems to be the most common. After prayers general feasting take place, but this is not an essential part of it.

The Uganda Maulid is not only a place to celebrate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and to listen to his

glories but also a meeting of the Muslims to conduct business advantageous to their community. Many things are done on Maulids besides worship. Bringing more people to the realm of Islam is probably one of the earliest offshoots of the uses of Maulid. The Muslims have no professional missionaries in Uganda and so a Maulid is a superb opportunity for them to call infidels to Islam. Reverend Jerome Bamunoba pointed out that ".....Muslims in Ankole do not go about preaching, but when they wish to preach they usually make a great feast (Maulid) at which they invite as many people as they suspect of getting convinced about Islam. Then the sheik preaches a sermon. . . . At one time a general feast was held at Mitooma (south Igara) at which Maulid was read by Sheik Masudi. About 150 Banyankole were circumcised on the spot."<sup>9</sup> Sheik Abdu Kamulegeya told me that about 1,000 people were converted at Maulids in 1965 alone. Muslims in Uganda therefore use Maulids for the spread of Islam.

Maulids also have acted as unscheduled conferences in Uganda where problems facing the Muslims are discussed. Any Muslim, and these days any person of any religion, is free to stand up as in ancient Synagogues of the Jews, to air his views on Islam, Muslims, or the country at large. Ramadhan Gava, the well known secular Muslim educationist, spread his ideas at Maulids that Muslims should attend secular schools. Political figures of late have started using Maulids as a medium of expression. In 1969 a minister of the government of the country gave a long speech about

communications at Pallissa in Bukedi and another one gave a policy speech at a Maulid at Mityana.

Maulids have acted as a uniting factor for Muslims in Uganda. If there is a Maulid in Kampala, Muslims come from as far as Yumbe in the West Nile District, Gulu in Acholi or Moroto in Karamoja to attend a Maulid. Alternatively, if there is a Maulid upcountry, Kampala normally sends representatives to those areas. They act as a social binding factor for it is at Maulids that old acquaintances are renewed and new friends are made.

Eating and feasting is part of the Uganda Maulid but not the most important, as adversaries tend to think. Some people, in fact, go home before eating time. After prayers, preachings and speeches are over, all people share in a common meal, in most cases rice curry locally called pillawo. Eating is a relief as the Maulid is a long and sometimes an exhausting celebration.

The development of a local "clergy," men ceremoniously set apart after their graduation from Koran School to lead prayers, to interpret the law and to guide the faithful on matters of religion is one of the unique ways through which Islam has consolidated itself in Uganda. It is true that there is no monkery or priesthood in Islam but in Uganda, something akin to this has developed. After the religious wars, most of the Arabs from the coast who had taught Islam to Africans were exterminated. Fortunately, there were a few African, a very few of them, who had learned enough to

teach others the rudiments of Islam and to lead prayers. They taught religion in Koran schools and those of their students that were well versed on Islamic law, figih or tafsir were ceremoniously graduated. The new graduates received the prestigious title of a sheik with a paper certifying the qualification. Throughout Uganda, it is the sheiks who lead prayers, who teach others advanced Islam and who give opinions about Islam. Any wise and knowledgeable person who has not been graduated or consecrated as a sheik has little chance of officiating at mosques or leading prayers. Public ceremonies of consecrating sheiks began in 1935. In that year, Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula graduated his best students, Yusufu Kasujja of Masaka and Muhammadi Lubowa from Butambala. A second batch of sheiks which was consecrated in 1946 included Sheik Abdulhimani Mivule and Sheik Muhamadi Mayanja. Sheik Ali Kulumba, now the Deputy Kadhi of Uganda, was made so by Swaibu Ssemakula in 1949. These sheiks went all round the country teaching and preaching Islam. It is due to them that thorough knowledge of Islam has filtered through and consolidated itself in the general mass of people. To grasp fully how they did it let us briefly look at the lives of three of these teachers, two of them native Ugandans, and one of them an outsider who taught Islam in Uganda:

(a) Sheik Abdallah

He was one of the pages who escaped Mutesa's fury when he executed the rebellious Muslim pages around 1876.

He concealed himself in a Zanzibar caravan and went to Zanzibar where he intensively studied Islam. There he was made a sheik. John Rowe is of the opinion that Sheik Abdallah was the first Muganda to become a sheik in the colonial era and taught many leading Baganda, including Sheik Haji Abdallah Sekimwanyi, Sheik Nsambu and Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula. All of them remember him very well. However, sources both oral and written are not agreed as to his second name. Some give it as Mayanja while others as Kyayambadde.

(b) Sheik Haji Mohammed Abdallah

Yacin, the son of Sheik Mohammed Abdallah and almost all the Nubian community at Bombo claim that the old man's home was "Burunon" in Nigeria. It is claimed that in the early 1890's Sheik Mohammed Abdallah left Nigeria and went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. As he was always in hunger for learning, he decided to stay in Mecca. There he associated himself with whoever or whatever group could quench his academic thirst. After seven years, he decided to leave the holy places and moved to Egypt where he stayed for three years and then went to Ethiopia. Here he taught for some seven years.

He then moved to Kismayu in Somaliland where he was recruited to teach soldiers and their children. By 1905, he was doing the same job with the Kenya army in Nairobi.

One day, he decided to come to Uganda to visit some Nubian soldier friends staying at Kampala and Bombo. As



soon as he was noticed in Kampala, he was engaged to teach soldiers among the Uganda troops. He was stationed at Bombo where he helped build a mosque and a school.

In 1913, he went to Tanganyika where he stayed for eight years doing the same job but later came back to Bombo. In 1927 he returned to Nairobi but came back in 1930. In that very year, he left Bombo and went to Arua where, according to Yacin Mohammed, he helped convert more than 100,000 people to Islam. The people in Arua know him very well as I found out when I interviewed leading personalities there in 1968. In 1943, he fell ill and was brought from Arua to Bombo, but died six months later. His white washed brick tomb is the only one at the Bombo mosque yard and is very well looked after. Every Muslim at Bombo knows whose tomb it is and I understand some think it has some Baraka which can be obtained by touching it.

He married a Nubian woman and had six children, two boys and four girls. In 1946, his brother Haji Ysuf Abdallah came to look for him via "Forati Lame" (probably Fort Lamy) and then by way of Khartoum. The soldiers, some of whom he had taught at numerous posts, told him that they had heard of Sheik Mohammed Abdallah further south. Then he came to Arua where they told him to proceed to Bombo. When Yusuf arrived at Bombo, he found the old man dead but Yacin Mohammed had carefully kept the family writing board, Loho Zakumi, which had been given to Mohammed Abdallah while young and also the family Koran. I have looked at both

those items. Yusuf wanted to take the sons of his brother home but they refused.

It is probably due to this great teacher that Islam was carried to Bombo, Arua, Entebbe and other places where army camps were established. Not only did he teach soldiers but also Muslims from the surrounding areas. Many Ugandans know Sheik Mohammed Abdallah very well. He taught them and helped them in other religious activities. He encouraged Sheik Haji Sekimwany, the first Muganda to go to Mecca, to undertake the pilgrimage. He drew a map of the way to Mecca, advising him on stopping points, where to get food and people to meet on the way. Sheik Ahmad Nsambu of Natete studied under Sheik Mohammed Abdallah and remembers him very well.

(c) Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula

Swaibu Ssemakula was the son of Bakikamuganda of the Lugave clan who worked in Kabaka Mwanga's palace in Ekitongole Ekizuzi. Ssemakula was baptised by a protestant catechist at Buwaya in Busiro where he learned the rudiments of the Bible.

Like other Africans at the time he sought work to pay the hut tax. He went to Entebbe to seek work. He then joined a group of Baganda who were going to Kisumu where a number of Baganda porters were already working.<sup>10</sup> Ssemakula met and was often in the company of Swahilis such as Yusufu Nubbi, Juma Suimbi, Musabawa bin Abeedi, Mzee Midaadi and



Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula (d. 1973)

many others who treated him well, especially when he fell sick.

So pleased was he by Islam that when he came back to Uganda, he went to the District Commissioner's cook named Shabani who circumcised him and gave him the name of Swaibu. Then Ssemakula began a relentless search for knowledge. As there were no formal schools for teaching Islam, Swaibu went to the traditional "Koran Schools." The Koran School or Madarasati, as it is called in Uganda is not necessarily an institution with buildings, blackboards, desks or playing fields. When the Arabs came to Uganda, they taught the elements of Islam to a few Africans. When they left, after the British had taken over, the job was left to the African converts. A father who had a little knowledge of Islam became the teacher of his family, especially the children. But not all fathers were well learned to teach Islam to their family to a high level. On each village, however, there was usually an individual who knew better than the rest. Parents sent their children, and sometimes they themselves went, to this man for instruction. The students did not pay school fees but paid him by working manually at whatever job he gave them. If they graduated from his house and he felt that he had imparted all that he could, he passed them on to a more learned instructor who might be a sheik or any other learned man. Thus a student moved from one teacher to another in search of more knowledge. The Koran was, and still is emphasized as the law of God, the book of perfection in which

nothing as ever or will ever be changed. Students were encouraged to learn by heart rather than to understand.

It was through such an educational system, if you can call it a system, that Swaibu Ssemakula went. He went to Butambala near the house of Twaibu Magato, the Ssaza chief and utilized Magato's teacher. Then he went to Muwalimu Hamadi Musale's house at Kyanja in Kyadondo county. From there he went to Kiziba in what is now Northern Tanzania and studied there for some years. On coming back, he went to help Yusufu Byakuno, a Muganda Muslim teacher stationed at Mbale to teach Baganda sub-imperialists working in the Eastern Province. There, he met a learned sheik called Abdu Samadu ibn Najim, who further helped Swaibu in the Islamic religions sciences. The greatest day for Swaibu came in 1911 when Abdu Ssamadu consecrated him as a sheik at Mbale.

In time, many Muslims in East Africa recognized the wide knowledge of Swaibu Ssemakula. Non-Muslim visitors were often taken to him to tell them about Islam in Uganda. In 1962 Prince Badru Kakungulu asked Swaibu Ssemakula to represent Uganda Muslims in prayer for Uganda's independence at Kololo airfield. In 1965 Joseph Schacht wrote that:

according to a general consensus of opinion, the most learned Shaykh is Shaykh Swaibu Ssemakula, a retired Mufti, who in July, 1964 said he was 89 years old.<sup>11</sup>

However, Swaibu's most important contribution to the carrying and spread of Islam was to teach, to graduate and consecrate sheiks not only in Uganda but also in the whole of East

Africa. He began as probably the most learned African in Uganda around 1930's, to give advanced instruction to graduates from Koran schools around Buganda at the following places: Buwendo in Kyagwe in 1911, Kabunge in Kyadondo in 1912, Namasumbi in 1927, Kawempe in Kyadondo in 1930, Kitosi in Buddu in 1935 and Katuumu in Bulemezi as from 1950.

After teaching and graduating them as sheiks, Swaibu Ssemakula sent these teachers to all parts of Uganda. Joseph Schacht in the same paper gives credit to Swaibu and adds that "Shaykh Shu'ayb gives advanced teaching in Islamic subjects to future imams (Mullahs) and Shaykhs in the Bwaise mosque on the outskirts of Kampala." The impact that these teachers have exerted on Islam is reflected in the number of Koran schools that mushroomed all over the country and the increase of the number of Muslims that I have mentioned earlier on.

In a way Uganda Islam bears many marks of Swaibu's innovations. He introduced the Maulids that we discussed earlier, he introduced the Matali that we spoke about in the second chapter and he refused any compromise with modern ways or African traditional religions which made Islam appear to the young as a religion of stagnant illiterates. Up to 1966 or thereabouts, Swaibu Ssemakula was a very popular and respected man. But due to understandable frustrations meted out to him by Muslim authorities, he made the mistake of siding with one section of the Muslims, NAAM (the National Association for the Advancement of Muslims). This

upset a number of people who saw Naam as a pipe through which the government smoked its brand of tobacco. When the government changed, Swaibu retired to his country home where he died in 1973 as a forgotten and isolated man. But his contribution to Uganda Islam cannot be erased from the pages of history.

There were many other teachers like Sheik Haji Abdalla Sekimwany, Sheik Ahmad Nsambu, whose work I am not able to discuss here but who contributed a lot to the carrying of Islam from one place to another in Uganda. Almost all these teachers were simple uneducated and often poor people. They had a lot of obstacles in their path such as lack of finance, of organization of schools and hospitals to entice their would-be followers, of government opposition and of internal conflicts. Yet they achieved a lot for Islam. Was it Islam that inspired them to all that they did or was it personal motivation? I do not have an answer.

However, consolidation and expansion of Islam were slowed and hindered by organizational problems. Muslims in Uganda failed to form a single organization, community or body that would have pulled their meager resources and energy towards a common aim. First of all they were divided on racial lines. Asian Muslims had their own mosques, schools and social centers. These were again divided along sectarian and sometimes ethnic lines. The Sunni Muslims, obviously, did not go to the mosques of the Shia Ismailis. Oman Sunnis did not have a common social or religious center with

Pakistani or Indian Sunnis. Each group cocooned itself in its own environment and never opened her doors to the other.

As for the African Muslims, the situation was worse. Not only were they divided upon petty personal issues, but also, they were at one another's throats. The divisions which started over leadership of the community extended and almost paralyzed all aspects of the Muslim community in Uganda. To give the reader thorough understanding of what happened, I think it is necessary for me to go back to the period of the Religious Wars and analyze how the divisions began and matured. Kalema, the Muslim "Kabaka" died of smallpox while still in exile. He was succeeded as the "Kabaka of Muslims" by Nuhu Mbogo, a son of Suna and brother of Mutesa I. When Lugard came into Uganda, the Muslims were still at large in 1891; Lugard and Captain Williams attacked them with a Baganda force that decisively defeated the Muslims in Bugangazi. Through Dualla, a Somali assistant, and Selim Bey, a Sudanese leading soldier, Lugard negotiated with the Muslims leaders, namely, Mbogo and Masudi Kisasa, his assistant or Katikiro. According to official records, Mbogo accepted that he would renounce all claims to Kabakaship in return for safety and "compensations." But according to Muslim authorities, the Muslims were tricked into a trap by the Somali Dualla and Nubian Selim Bey who told them that they were emissaries of the Sultan of Zanzibar who was about to fight for them. Because of that the Muslims advanced towards Buganda only to find themselves surrounded.<sup>12</sup> It is





Omulangira Nuhu Mbogo

hard to decide which side is right except to say that by 1892 the Muslims were a defeated group. A later fight did not change their fortunes as we saw in Chapter Four. Mbogo, however, did not go along with the Muslim hawks. This might have been due either to his realization of the desperately weak situation the Muslim faction was or his desire to be on good terms with the conquerors. I tend to lean to the latter point of view for when the Sudanese troops mutinied in 1897 and promised to make him Kabaka--in 1897, he refused and carried out what many Muslims, especially the troops, considered a betrayal of Islam. He showed the letter in which the Sudanese troops had embodied their promises to him to George Wilson, the Sub-Commissioner at Kampala. As a result, both the Buganda and British administrations came to trust and give him a place of honor in society. He was one of the signatories of the 1900 Uganda Agreement between Britain and Buganda. He was, by the same agreement allocated a freehold of 24 square miles of land "for himself and his adherents" with a yearly income of two hundred and fifty pounds.

The Muslim community, defeated and dispirited, needed a man of social importance to speak for them and Mbogo did this very well. He was well loved by his followers and of course by the authorities with whom he was a collaborator. But he never devised an institution or system of administration to look after the affairs of Islam in Uganda. He retained too much power and the community held together because he

was a popular and strong leader. As soon as he died, the edifice he had built began to crumble. Another mistake he made was his desire to make his position hereditary. In 1913, he expressed the desire that the leadership "of the community" should remain in his family. To this end, he nominated Masudi Kisasa as Katikiro to his eldest son and his Mu'allim, Ali Kadogo as head of all religious affairs of the Muslims in Uganda. While he lived, as I said above, the community was tied together by his personality and dignity. But when he died in 1921, the Muslim Community was rent asunder on the question of leadership. He wanted his son to succeed him as leader of Muslims but a few leading Muslims like Taibu Magato, Ssaza chief of Butambala, and Haji Abdalla Ssekimwanyi of Bukoto thought that leadership should be reserved for the most well versed in religious matters and that Badiru Kakungulu was not fit for that task.

When Prince Badiru Kakungulu reached the age of twenty in 1928 a few Muslims wrote to the Kabaka, Daudi Chwa, that they would like to have the young prince as their leader. The Kabaka without hesitation confirmed Kakungulu as the leader of Muslims in Uganda. The Provincial Commissioner, Buganda, queried the confirmation. Taibu Magato supported by Ministers at Mengo and Sheik Haji Abdalla Ssekimwanyi protested at what appeared to them the Kabaka's interference in their religious affairs. But Daudi Chwa did not withdraw his confirmation. Thus, gradually a division

caused by quarrels over leadership matured in the Muslim community. The cracks it caused are still being felt today and I am sure will be felt for long yet to come.

As time went, ideological dressings were added and strengthened each of the two groups i.e. those for on one hand, and those against the leadership of Prince Badiru Kakungulu on the other. The Butambala groups (led by Taibu Magato, the Katambala and Abdallah Ssekimwanyi) theorized that on Friday, there was no need of saying, after the Juma prayers, an extra salat, the al-Zuhur, pronounced locally as the Zukuli. The Kibuli group led by Prince Badiru Kakungulu pointed out that it was necessary to say all the five prayers a day all through the week including Friday, and that on this latter day, an extra prayer, al-Zuhur, had to be said. About 1923, Sir Geoffry Archer got acquainted with the problem and suggested that a ruling on this doctrinal difference be obtained. In 1927, the government appointed an expert, Haji Mohammed Ibrahim, from Tanganyika to advise the government on Islamic religious affairs. But Sheik Haji Abdalla Ssekimwanyi refused to recognize the government appointee and suggested his own arbitrator, by the name of Sharif Ali bin Mohammed. The government was paralyzed and the matter lay in limbo till the death of Abdalla Ssekimwanyi.

When the latter died, some forward-looking Muslims decided that a stop should be put to the difference. Thus in 1947 two representatives from each group were sent to

to consult the Shafii Mufti of Mecca about their religious differences. The Mufti was vague in his reply. He advised that:

- (a) A large Friday mosque should be built where all Muslims should go for the Friday prayer.
- (b) There was no need to say the extra prayer on Friday.
- (c) Prince Badiru should be informed about it.

The representatives duly reported the advice given them in Mecca but they increased rather than cured Muslim disunity for:

- (i) The greater number of Muslims including Badiru Kakungulu, Swaibu Ssemakula, Muhammad Lubowa, etc. agreed to give up the extra al-Zuhur prayer and became popularly known as the New Juma Sect constituting themselves as the Uganda Muslim Community. Their headquarters were at Kibuli where a great Friday mosque was built. This group recognized Prince Badru Kakungulu as leader of the Muslims in Uganda.
- (ii) A section of the former Kibuli group refused to give up the extra al-Zuhur prayer and formed a new group under Sheik Mivule. Their headquarters were located at Kawempe.
- (iii) Another group of the former Butambala (old Juma) refused to recognize the leadership of Badiru Kakungulu. They were led by Sheik Mugenyiasooka and Yusufu Mutenda. Their headquarters were at Bukoto. They refused Matali (duffs) or any form of drums to be played on their

religious ceremonies.

Due to these divisions, Muslims in Uganda, but especially in Buganda, failed to come together and solve their most urgent problems. Some of these problems are very well discussed by Gee and there is no need to repeat them here. Elsewhere in Uganda, Muslims were either divided along the Buganda lines of religious allegiances such as was the case in Busoga and Ankole or they paid allegiance to their local leaders such as was the case in West Nile and Madi.

In a desire to end these differences, some educated Muslims in 1966-7 founded the National Association for the Advancement of Muslims (NAAM). Since most of the founding members were connected with the then Uganda Government and were recruited from mainly outside Buganda, many leading Baganda saw the new association as a broom to sweep away Ganda leadership. Although many Baganda leading sheiks such as Swaibu Ssemakula, Ahmad Nsambu, Mivule and Lutale joined the Association, Naam never obtained the confidence of the Baganda Muslims. Thus Muslim unity had to wait for another political era. Muslims in Uganda were thus by 1970 still divided. The thing that distinguished them from the rest of the people was the fact that they were Muslims. They never constituted a single proud united community.

Despite these problems of organization, Islam achieved a lot in this period. It advanced from the stage when all its adherents knew about their religion was the declaration of oneness of God and the prophethood of Mohammed to a stage

where there was a cadre of men well versed in Islamic religious sciences. These men began slowly to transmit Islamic knowledge to the rest of the converts. The time when Islam will be so integrated into the lives of the people so that it is the main determining factor of social behavior such as is the case in some parts of West Africa may never come to Uganda. In terms of numbers, the figures were small. But considering the obstacles in the way of Islam such as lack of trained missionaries, lack of a central organization, lack of financial resources, etc., it was a commendable achievement.

CHAPTER VI: FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Gee, T. W. Ibid.
- <sup>2</sup>Kulumba, A. Ebyafayo p. 14.
- <sup>3</sup>Souvenir of the East African Muslim Welfare Society, Dec., 1963.
- <sup>4</sup>Bukedi. Annual Report 1916-1917, Entebbe Government Archives 23/2445.
- <sup>5</sup>1939/1909 Entebbe Government Archives.
- <sup>6</sup>Shorter Encyclopædia of Islam, Leiden 1961, pp. 365-8.
- <sup>7</sup>Kulumba, Ali. Ebyafayo, Kampala, 1953 p. 12.
- <sup>8</sup>Samula-Kimuli. Typescript sheet at Makerere.
- <sup>9</sup>Bamunoba, J. Ibid., p. 16.
- <sup>10</sup>Entebbe Government Archives. Outward 11A Item 11/9 8th November 1901 Busoga Correspondences.
- <sup>11</sup>Joseph Schacht "Notes on Islam in East Africa" in Studia Islamica XXIII, 1965, Paris p. 94.
- <sup>12</sup>Ahmad Nsambu. Interview August 1973.  
Ssekimwanyii, A. Ebyafayo p. 5.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

We can, at last say without much hesitation, that it was not the similarity of the demands of Islam with those of the African way of life that facilitated and explains the penetration of the crescent into African societies of Uganda. As a matter of fact, African traditions and customs, which were still strong and firm, acted as a barrier to the spread and progress of Islam. This is because the demands of Islam contradicted those of the African traditions and customs that people were accustomed to. The African concept of the cosmos, of man in relation to the environment he lived in and the world at large was very different from that demanded by Islam. Man's concept of the creator, of spiritual beings, of life and death and of the value system upon which he based his actions were different from those introduced by Islam. Besides, there were a number of customs especially those related to rites de passage that were not accomodatable into Islam unless they were subjected to a metamorphic process. True, there were some customs concerning marriage and divorce which were not extremely contradictory to the demands of Islam but these were the exceptions rather than the general.

This study has suggested that it was the weakening, disruption and sometimes the complete destruction of the African way of life that created what may be termed "a partial belief vacuum" which Islam and indeed other foreign beliefs filled. Because of the decay that followed the weakening of the African traditions, customs and way of life, gaps and cracks opened in the African society that let in foreign beliefs. The penetration of foreign beliefs was further facilitated, once they had made their initial inroads, by the failure of the African beliefs either to compete effectively with the incoming beliefs or to cope with the resultant changes. As the preachers of foreign beliefs came from, or were thought to represent, a superior technology, they were able to demonstrate how the African way of doing things was not only archaic but also inferior to theirs.

The spread of Islam in Uganda is best understood within the above context; i.e. of a belief from a superior culture penetrating a weakening and disintegrative way of life. In this country, Islam was first preached in the kingdom of Buganda where the people's confidence in their way of life was undergoing a crisis. Traditional religions were not only weak in the sense that they were daily failing to perform what was expected of them but they were also under constant attack from the king. The Baganda's social organization had, and was still, undergoing painful changes that must have confused its members. Their economic system had shifted away from the clanheads and other hereditary

elites to the king and his men. And finally, the monarchy who the people had begun to regard as their "ultimate concern" was beginning to lose its formerly achieved status. The coming of Islam and later, Christianity, coincided with this weakening of confidence in the traditional way of life. Since people in any society need a belief system to live by and justify their actions, foreign beliefs came at an opportune moment. They provided an alternative belief system that many people in Buganda easily grabbed. This is why Islam and Christianity penetrated so quickly and so easily into Buganda in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It was not because they were necessarily "more true" than African traditional beliefs. Rather, they appeared to be so and were regarded by the elite as such.

The undermining of the African way of life was so effectively done by the simultaneous adoption of foreign religions, especially Islam, that in 1888 the converts to the latter were able to initiate a revolution that changed the Baganda concept of life, power and the world. Henceforth the king lost his position as a sacral monarch; thus ceasing to personify the state. His arbitrary powers were clamped down and given to an oligarchy of converts to the new religions. From then on, foreign beliefs (based on Islam and Christianity) became the value system, the base or the criterion upon which people justified their actions instead of their traditional beliefs.

Islam and Christianity thus became the religions of

the state as from 1888 with Muslims and Christians sharing positions of power. It was an irreversable victory for foreign beliefs and their adherents. Though the Muslims and Christians fought over the spoils in what are known as the Buganda Religious Wars for over six years culminating in the defeat of the Muslims, Buganda and indeed Uganda did not become a pillar of salt; for it never turned back to traditional beliefs and life styles. For the Muslims, it was the end of a dream, a shattering of hopes of creating a dar-Islam in Central East Africa. The few who were not killed off in the religious wars either accepted dishonorable terms or fled the country. The events in Buganda immediately after the religious wars were instrumental in the spreading of Islam to the rest of Uganda. It was carried from Buganda to the rest of the country by Baganda Muslims who had been rejected by their own people through military conquest. But Islam did not make much progress in areas outside Buganda. Unaided by political power, Islam failed to penetrate or break the traditional beliefs of these people, which were, unlike in Buganda, still intact and firm.

Besides the above mentioned barriers, Islam had a number of obstacles in its road into Uganda. In the early 1890's Muslims had to fight a well coordinated and well armed enemy backed by a people with superior technology. When the Muslims lost the war and when European imperialism was fully established, Muslims had to accept the position of a second class citizenship. Laws and decrees were passed

against them in particular and Islam in general. Colonial officials in collaboration with the missionaries viewed it as their duty to block any further progress of Islam. Alternatively the Muslims lacked educated manpower which would have organized the faithful not only to better their lot but also to expand their community. They did not have schools or hospitals to entice would-be converts to their ranks like the Christian missionaries had. Their economic base was very shaky for unlike the Roman Catholics and Protestant Christians, the Muslims did not have freehold lands to extract revenue. But Islam as a religion achieved something. A significant number of people joined the community which more than doubled between 1900 and 1945. They built mosques some of which are Uganda's landmarks. They built Koran schools that turned out a local "clergy" of sheiks that is well versed in Islamic religious sciences. Those that could afford have been, and still, go to Mecca for the pilgrimage. And they have adopted and localized some Islamic practices such as Maulid-an Nabbi to fit the local scene. Their achievements stand out more if it is remembered that the preachers and leaders of Islam in Uganda were not only locally recruited but were "unschooled" folk often from the countryside.

But, despite all those achievements, Islam in Uganda has remained a religion and has failed to become a culture of its adherents. It does not permeate all the thoughts, all the actions and all the affairs of the lives of its

adherents. In some way, Islam is a kind of optional extra which Muslims in Uganda choose to add to their other daily concerns like having a meal, sex, sport, and work. It is like a garb put on during the five daily prayers, the Friday prayer, during Ramadhan and for a few during the pilgrimage to Mecca. For the rest of the time, Muslims in Uganda must accept the values of the majority of the people--essentially Christian values. On the East African coast, at least in the period before 1950, Islam was not only a religion but a way of life determining not only individual actions but also controlling and determining social behavior. It was not only the law of the land but also the value system of society. In Uganda this has never, nor do I think it will ever be, the case. It would need a Muslim theocracy such as was the case in the Western Sudan or a long history of undisputed Islamic influence such as was the case on the East African coast to integrate Islam fully into the daily lives of the people of Uganda. Butambala County in Buganda and Madi District, where the numbers of Muslims are higher than those of Christians are too vulnerable to the surrounding Christian majority to carve out a Muslim culture. This failure of Islam to fully integrate itself in the life styles of its adherents in Uganda is the tragedy of Islam in this country and indeed the rest of East Africa. Secularism amongst the educated Muslims and materialism amongst both the sophisticated and the unsophisticated are likely to uproot Islam at a far greater speed than they will Christianity.

Further, the upheavals and chaos that are bound to take place in such an uneconomically unviable and unjustifiable state as Uganda are likely to undermine religion and Islam in particular, very much.

From the above study it can be inferred; first, that people or societies adopt new beliefs not necessarily for the "truth" in them but because of a given situation that tends to give these beliefs a practical excuse or opportunity for appearing to be true. There is no way of proving that either Islam or Christianity had more truth than the African traditional beliefs. Yet due to the situation prevailing in Uganda and indeed in Africa then, Christianity and Islam appeared to have had more truth because both could serve a practical purpose better than the African traditional beliefs. Secondly, beliefs originating from a superior technological culture armed with the confidence that comes after success easily displace those of a weaker culture. As long as African development, technology and power to defend herself remain vulnerable, then Africa will remain a prey to foreign belief of all types.

APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY

Abashare (Luny.)	Means "the cut ones" i.e. the circumcised or mutilated.
dār-al-Islām (Ar.)	The abode of Islam i.e. a country in which Islamic law is paramount and where a Muslim sovereign is the ruler. Dar al-harb or abode of war is that land under infidel influence.
Baraka (Ar.)	Blessing, grace.
Ee, Ee (Lug)	I see! I see!
Fakih or Faqih (Ar.)	One who possesses knowledge. But generally it is used to refer to a Muslim lawyer, theologian or an expert in Islamic religious sciences.
Fiqih (Ar.)	Dogmatic theology of Islamic religious sciences.
Gabunga (Lug.)	Admiral; chief in charge of the king's boats or canoes.
<u>Hadith</u>	Tradition; communication or narrative handed over from one generation to another. In Islam however "the <u>hadith</u> " is a record of actions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed.
Hakibalu	Luganda version of "Allah Akbar" (Ar.) i.e. God is great.
Hegira (Ar.)	Literary it means a migration but in Islam it can mean any of the following: (a) The historical flight of the prophet from Mecca to Medina. (b) The beginning of the Muslim era from the prophet's flight in 622. (c) The act of a Muslims leaving infidel rule to Muslim lands. (d) Fleeing from sin.



Imām (Ar.)	Among the Sunni, and in the way it is used in the text, it means a leader in prayers. When two or more faithful meet for prayer, one of them, the most learned and most worthy, must act as Imām and the rest follow him. The Shi'ahs however, use the term Imām to refer to the twelve leaders <u>set apart</u> for that purpose. The Sunnis sometimes refer to the leader of the Muslim community as Imām.
Jeneza (Sw.)	Bier
Jihād (Ar.)	Struggle in the way of God, effort or striving in the path of God. This involves four stages: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Purification of one's heart.</li> <li>(b) To do what is good and to avoid what is evil.</li> <li>(c) To preach the good and forbid the evil to others.</li> <li>(d) To take up the sword, if need be, and defend the truth.</li> </ol>
Jinn or djinn (Ar.)	Are what probably we in Africa call spiritual beings. They are intelligent and capable of appearing in different forms. The prophet was sent to them just as he was sent to mankind.
Jungute (Ba.)	Of Kijungute i.e. Muslim warriors who encamped at a place called Kijungute in Bunyoro while they waited better fortunes to return to Buganda.
Kabaka (Lug.)	King
Kafiri	Luganda corruption of Kāfirūn (Ar.) i.e. non-believers, or lit, those who cover the truth.
Kasujju (Lug.)	County chief of Busujju County, Buganda.
Katambala (Lug.)	County chief of Butambala, Buganda.
Katonda (Lug.)	The Creator, God.
Kauta (Lug.)	Chief of the royal cooks.

- Kaumpuli (Lug.) (a) Bubonic plague; or any violent disease.  
(b) A God who caused this sickness. His main shrine was in the woods of Buyege in Busiro.
- Kawali (Lug.) Smallpox
- Kimbugwe (Lug.) The keeper of the Kabaka's umbilical cord. Now it also refers to the county chief of Buluuli.
- Kitongole (Lug.) Department or administrative division. In modern terms it also means an office or position of a chief-- a Mutongole.
- Kiwewa (Lug.) Name given to the first male child of the king.
- Lubaale (Lug.) God or deity.
- Madarasati (Ar.) Corruption of madrasah meaning school or instructing center.
- Madhabs (Ar.) Schools of law (Sunni) founded by four great doctors. Muslims believe that in addition to the Koran and Hadith, the concurrence of the learned called Ijmā gives the faithful guidance in the practice of religion. The Shi'as believe that they still possess guided men (Mujitahids) capable of giving infallible interpretations of the law. The Sunni on the other hand believe that since the days of the four great doctors, each of which founded a school of law, Ijmā has not been possible. Consequently they follow these doctors of law: Imām Abu Hanifa, Abu 'Abd Allah Mālik b. Anas b. Malik bin Abī 'Amir b. 'Amir b. al-Hārith b. Ghaimān b. Khuthail b. 'Amr b. al-Hārith al-Asbahī or in short Malik b. Anas, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi'i, and Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal. In East Africa, most people follow al-Shafi'i school of law. In Uganda, however, the descendants of Sudanese troops are said to still retain some form of Maliki observances. The

- royal family of Zanzibar used to follow the Hanbali School of Law.
- Mandwa (Lug.) Medium.
- (Ma) Tari (Sw.) Tari is a Swahili word for the round drum. In Luganda it refers to duffs played by Muslims introduced into the country by coastal traders.
- Matanga (Sw.) Mats.
- Maulid, Mawlid or Mawlud (Ar.) Time, place and celebration of the birthday of anyone particularly of the prophet Mohammed.
- Menya or Menhya Hereditary ruler of Bugweri County of Busoga.
- Mirembe (Lug.) The reigns of kings. One reign is approximately twenty years. It can also mean a fashion or period.
- Misambwa (singular Musambwa - Lug.) Spiritual being, often a tutelary deity.
- Muwallim Luganda corruption of Mu'allim (Ar.) meaning a clerick or a teacher in a school or mosque.
- Mufti (Ar.) He who gives interpretations--fatwas--because of his immense knowledge of the law. He assists the judge in finding answers from the Koran, the Hadith and other Muslim works of law.
- Mugema (Lug.) Old name of a chief who also could immunize from sickness.
- Mugabe (Luny.) The King of Nkore.
- Mukama (Lunyororo--Lutoro) The King of Bunyororo and also Toro.
- Mukasa (Lug.) The God of the lakes especially Lake Victoria. He seemed to play the role, among the Ganda Gods, that Zeus played in ancient Greece.
- Mukwenda (Lug.) County chief of Ssinga, Buganda.

- Mutaka (Lug.) Guardian of clan lands with implied form of guardianship. Bataka is plural.
- Muwadi (Lug.) Nickname for a Muslim.
- Muwanga (Lug.) According to Nsimbi, Muwanga was the Chief of Gods.
- Pokino (Lug.) Ssaza Chief of Buddu County, Buganda.
- Qiblah (Ar.) The direction in which Muslims face when praying which in fact is Mecca.
- "Readers" In the text this word means converts to any of the three world religions i.e. Islam, Roman Catholic and Anglican Protestantism. The early converts were known as such because the process involved reading either the Koran or the Bible.
- Ruhanga (Luny., Lut. and Lunny.) God.
- as-Sakhrāh The rock at Jerusalem on which the Temple was erected and on which now stands the "Dome on the Rock" or the mosque of Omar.
- as-Salaam alaikum (Ar.) Peace be upon thee is a usual way a Muslim salutes another. The reply is as follows: as-Salaam alaik wa rahmatu llahi i.e. peace be on thee as well as the mercy of God.
- Salāt (Ar.) Prayer or divine service obligatory to all Muslims. A Muslim must pray the following prayers at the following times:
  1. Salātu al-Zuhr at midday.
  2. Salātu al-Asr in the afternoon.
  3. Salātu al-Maghrib around sunset.
  4. Salātu al-Isha at night.
  5. Salātu al-Fajr at dawn.
There are three other voluntary prayers namely Salātu al-Ishraq when the sun has well risen, Salātu al-Zuha about eleven a.m. and Salātu al-Tahajjud after midnight that faithful Muslims may offer.

Sawm (Ar.)

Fasting. The original meaning of the word is "to be at rest." In the ninth month, Ramazan (or Ramadhan) of the Muslim year, all faithful fast from dawn to sunset each day. The observance of this month is one of the five pillars in Islam. The prophet is reported as having said that during the month of Ramadhan "the gates of Paradise are open, and the gates of hell are shut, and the devils are chained by the leg and only those who observe it will be permitted the gate of heaven."

Sharif (Ar.)

Noble, exalted, one who is respected mainly because of noble birth, a descendant of illustrious ancestors or famed men. It is assumed that the qualities of his ancestors are transmitted to him. Popularly, especially in North Africa, it is used to refer to those who can claim descent from the house or family of the prophet Mohammed.

Sheik or Shaik (Ar.)

One who bears the mark of ~~old~~ age, a polite respectful title given to those who have achieved an academic, political, social or any other status in society. In Uganda it is regularly used to refer to a learned man who has passed the stage of Mu'allim and has been admitted to the ranks of sheik's.

Sufi (Ar.)

A Muslim mystic engaged in finding communication with God through life of purity ascetics. There is controversy over the origin of the word. Four of these are:

- (a) From the Arabic sūf i.e. "wool" which many of these mystics wore.
- (b) From the Arabic word sāfū or purity in reference to the metaphysical and social life these people tried to live.
- (c) From the Greek work for wisdom.
- (d) From sāfah or sophia, the name of a tribe of Arabs who in pre-Islamic Arabia separated themselves from the world and engaged exclusively to the service of the temple at Mecca.

- Ssabaddu (Lug.) Head of servants not living at court or compound. Third in rank to Gombolola chief.
- Ssabakaki (Lug.) The head royal gate keeper.
- Ssabataka (Lub.) Head of the clanheads i.e. the Kabaka.
- Ssaza (Lug.) County. A large territorial administrative division.
- Tabib (Ar.) Doctor of medicine. One who practices at-tabib, the science of medicine. Thus Abdallah Mutabibu who attended to Mutesa I's last days must have been a physician of some sort.
- Tafsir (Ar.) Explanation; a term used to refer to commentaries on books especially on the Koran and other works on Islam.
- Tarika (Ar.) The Arabic word means "road, way or path" to God. It is a term used to refer to a brotherhood of Muslims whose life is lived in the pursuit of ways to God. It is founded on a series of rules in addition to the Sharia (law of Islam) that are kept by members of that particular brotherhood. To become a member, the novice is initiated into it before a hierarchy of witnesses. If he lives far away he has to make periodic retreats with them in a "monastery" (ribat, zawiya) of the order. The zawiya or ribat is often built near the tomb of a reenerated saint usually connected with that order. In East Africa the order that claims any adherents in sufficient numbers is the Qadiriyya founded by 'Abd al-Kadir Djilan (d. 1166) founded in Bagdad. However, brotherhoods have not had, in East Africa, the influence they have achieved in West Africa.
- Umma (Ar.) A word borrowed from the Hebrew word Umma. In this study it is used to refer to a community of people with the same purpose.

Wankaaki (Lug.)

Main gate, at front entrance especially of the royal palace.

## APPENDIX II: ORAL SOURCES; THE INFORMANTS

### INTERVIEWS WITH ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE

Two type of oral interviews have been used in this work:

- A. Those that I personally conducted or were carried in my presence.
- B. Those that were conducted by others, typed and left for use by future researchers.

#### A. Interviews that I made personally

In a period of over five years, I have been able to visit, talk and interview many people but will only list the following if only I can shorten the list.

1. Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula of Kawempe near Kampala interviewed together with Prof. N. Q. King of Makerere and Prof. M. M. Watt of Edinburgh in 1967, (1970, 1973 by myself).
2. Asumumani Wamala, an old warrior of the Buganda Religious Wars. He was then (in 1967) over 100 years. He is now dead.
3. Hassani Ssebowa of Karorwe village in Buchinga, Ndorwa Country, Kigezi. He is one of the surviving Baganda sub-imperialist who settled in the lands they went to rule. He was over a hundred years old. I interviewed him with Kate J. Parry, a good friend of mine who came to Uganda to teach and help on a human level.
4. Ramadhan Gava founder and Secretary General of the Uganda Muslim Education Association on several occasions in 1967, 1969, and 1973. He is over 60 years old.
5. Sheik Ahmad Nsambu (over 80) a prominent Uganda Muslim now worn down by the trials of life and Muslim disputes in Uganda.
6. Sheik Abdul Azaake Matovu (over 50) at Bwaise in 1969 where he was a teacher and on two other occasions in 1973 when he had become the Cheif Khadi of Uganda.



7. Kulumba, Sheik Ali (over 60); three interviews in 1969 and two in 1973 when he had been elected Deputy Chief Khadi of Uganda. He lives in Kampala.
8. Juma Waiswa (died in 1970) on 25th August 1969 in his house at Bugembe Busoga. He was the first Musoga Sheikh.
9. Kamulegeya, Abdu (over 40) at his house near Makerere. He is young but his grasp of the past is fantastic.
10. Muhammad Soofi, Chief Ahmmadiyya Missionary in Uganda on 24th August 1969 at the Mission headquarters, Jinja.
11. Yacin bin Abdalla the son of the old Sheik of Bombo (Muhamad bin Abdalla) together with Prof. Noel King in May 1967 and by myself in May 1973. He is over 50 years old.
12. Haji Ramadham Lathu (over 60) of Bombo at Bombo on 15th of December 1967.
13. Surur Doka, who was Secretary of the East African Sudanese (Uganda) Association, Bombo in June 1968.
14. Hassani Kamihanda (over 100 years) of Bukware. Toro together with Father Fitzgerald in June 1967.
15. Sheik Ibrahim Lubwaama of Bukware near Fort Portal, Toro in June in 1969.
16. Nuwa Muhammad of Kitumba near Fort Portal Toro in June 1969.
17. Salimu Wandera, son of Mena Munulo of Bujweri of 12th of Oct. 1969.
18. Ausi Mukama Kirunda (over 70) of Buwake Bugweri, Busoga on 13th of Oct. 1969 and May 1973.
19. Astanley Kasuwa (over 72) Nakibembe Bugweri, Busoga on 14th Oct. 1969.
20. Abu Bakr Kibeedi (over 40) of Buwabe Busoga on 15th Oct. 1969, 10th Dec. 1973.
21. Ali Kirunda-Kivejinja of Buwaabe (Bujweri) and Nawantumbi (Bugabula), Busoga. He is about forty and knows the history of the royal family of Bugweri very well.
22. Sheik Hassimu Njalira (over 60) of Nabigonda, Kachonga Bunyule Bukedi on 14th Sept. 1969.

23. Sheik Ahmad Swale of Kaptere Bukedi on 15th of Sept. 1969.
24. Sheik Muhamadi said of Kumi, Teso 1969.
25. Abdu Juma Biraharamire (secretary to the Muslim Supreme Council) May 1973.
26. Ausi Rwakaikara (over 40) who was secretary-General of Bunyoro and now with the Muslim Supreme Council. He is well acquainted with Muslim affairs both in Bunyoro and the rest of Uganda. I had several interviews with him in 1973.
27. Yusufu Nuhu of Yumbe West Nile, April 1968. He was over 70 when I interviewed him.
28. Gulamu Beg Muhammad of Yumbe West of the Nile in 1968. He was over 40 and co-ordinator of Muslim affairs in this part of the District.
29. Ahmad Kalifan, Arua, in 1969. He was a knowledgeable young rich man of over 30 years.
30. Badiru Kakungulu, Prince (over 60) on a few intermittent occasions in 1973. I have not, though I tried on many occasions, been able to arrange a businesslike interview with him.

B. Interviews carried out by other people that I have worked with and in some cases used.

1. Ismael Ssendaulu (of Kabasanda, Butambala, Buganda) interviewed by Arye Oded on 20 Dec. 1967. Text in Dept. of Religious Studies and with Prof. Noel Q. King.
2. Asumani Wamala by Arye Oded on 20th Dec. 1970.
3. Juma Nsambu of Nadda Sabagabo County, Butambala. He was formerly a Saza (county) chief. He was interviewed by Arye Oded on 20th Dec. 1967. Text is with the Dept. of Religious Studies and Prof. N. Q. King.
4. Canon Pere Lukungu who worked in the Upper Nile Diocese. He was interviewed by C. K. Bamwoze on 16th June 1966.
5. Haji Omar Kanyabuzaana of Kigede, Buyaga Bunyoro interviewed on my behalf by Muhamud Kazimiraine an old friend now a teacher at Kabalega Sec. School Masindi, August 1969.

6. Haji Twaha Ali (60) a butcher at Busisi, Buyaga P. O. Box 23, Hoima interviewed by Muhamud Kazimiraine in 1969.
7. Karmadin Shamshudin (Bohora) interviewed by Muhamud Kazimiraine in 1969.
8. Muwalimu Hamani of Rushaki village near Kabale interviewed by Habib bib Salimu, then (1968) a Makerere student but now a graduate teacher at Kololo Sec. School, Kampala.
9. Muwallim Iddi of Kabale interviewed by Habib bin Salim in 1968.

## APPENDIX III: THE WRITTEN SOURCES

### UNPUBLISHED WORKS

#### Manuscripts (MSS)

Gomotoka, J. M. T. Makula (especially pt. VI).  
The MSS is kept in Makerere Library.

Katungulu, Musa Mukasa. A History of Islam in Uganda in the custody of the Department of Religious Studies at Makerere, it was obtained from the author by Arye Oded.

Miti, J. A Short History of Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga, Toro and Ankole; A microfilmed MSS kept in the Main Library, Makerere University, Kampala.

Nsambu, Sheik Ahmad Khabu. The Story of Islam in Uganda a MSS obtained by Prof. N. Q. King and Abdu Kasozi from the author and kept in the Dept. of Religious Studies at Makerere.

Rukidi, George. A History of Toro, MSS in a cyclostyled form in the Department of History, Makerere.

Swaibu, Ssemakula. (i) An Autobiography; a long MSS in possession of Prof. N. Q. King and myself. Obtained from the author (died August 1973) by N. Q. King and A. Kasozi.

(ii) History of Islam in Uganda, a MSS I got from him in 1973 shortly before his death.

Wamala, Solomon. Obulamu bwa Semei Kakungulu, a MSS in Makerere Main Library.

#### Private and Public Papers

##### (i) Private

Sheik Ahmad Nsambu allowed me to read his many files, reports and papers. Unfo-tunately, all of them were destroyed by his enemies in 1971.

Ramadhan Gava allowed me to read through the files, reports and memorandums of the Uganda Muslim Education Association both at his house and at Kibuli. Those at Kibuli were very useful.

Haji Musa Kasule of Wandegeya allowed me to read some of his private papers and letters.

Sheik Juma Waiswa of Bugembe put at my disposal all his personal papers for perusal.

Sheik Swaibu Ssemakula of Kawempe not only allowed me to read his papers but gave them to me to catalogue.

(ii) Public

- (a) Government papers, correspondences reports and memorandums mainly at Entebbe Government Archives but also at District Archives.
- (b) Papers at Muslim headquarters of the Uganda Muslim Community office at Kibuli, at Kawempe and Bukoto.
- (c) Papers, letters and other materials kept in old schools like Katuumu, Bwaise, Kibuli and Lukalu.
- (d) Formerly private papers now deposited in Makerere Library such as the Kagwa papers, C.M.S. papers, etc.

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Williams, T. S. M. The Coming of Christianity to an Ankole Village; M.A. Thesis in Makerere Library.

Oded, Arye. Muslim Factor in Buganda; Research leading to Ph.D. Thesis, Makerere.

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