REIMAGINING TRADITION:
THE POLITICS OF SUCCESSION
IN COLONIAL BUGANDA
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Introduction

Visiting *Kabaka* (King) Daudi Chwa's palace in 1907, C.W. Hattersley, a member of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), rejoiced in the cordial reception he and his wife received. Much to Hatterley's delight, the young *Kabaka* welcomed the missionary and his wife in the "approved fashion" while his attendants "brought in a magnificent silver tray, bearing a silver tea-service and china cups and saucers." As he sipped afternoon tea and chatted with the *Kabaka*, Hattersley took much pleasure in the appearance of the royal sitting room, which was "tastefully furnished, with carpets, curtains, English lamps and pictures, conspicuous amongst the latter being the handsome portraits of King Edward VII and our Queen." But the most heartening ornament of all for Hattersley was "the picture of our Lord as the 'Light of the World'" that hung adjacent to the pictures of the English king and queen.[1]

Descriptions similar to Hattersley's filled the memoirs of CMS missionaries in Buganda from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. CMS missionaries took much pleasure in the common sight in Mengo, the capital of Buganda, of Baganda who wore trousers and vests, hosted tea parties in the English fashion, and attended services in the many newly built brick churches. The enthusiasm with which the Baganda embraced the Christian civilizing mission served for the missionaries as both a sign of the success of their undertaking as well as an indication of the mental capabilities of the Baganda. Christian missionaries had seldom met with such success in Africa, and the CMS missionaries stationed in Buganda believed they were well on their way to establishing a Christian kingdom.

Hattersley's description of the royal sitting room portrays the extent to which European imagery had infiltrated the *Kabaka's* palace. The discovery of a Christian *Kabaka* well versed in European manners generates questions concerning the nature of the colonial encounter between the Baganda and European officials, religious and administrative. In a kingdom with a rich history dating back at least to the fifteenth century, the rapid spread of Christianity and European material culture commands the historian's attention and begs for explanation. These types of concerns, however, extend beyond the case

of Buganda. Confronted with sometimes striking instances of cultural and religious change, scholars have long grappled with the problem of how to interpret the seemingly moribund fate of African tradition during the colonial period. While all scholars agree that colonial ideology influenced preexisting practices, disagreements endure concerning the nature of colonialism's effects on longstanding African traditions.

The formative period of colonial rule in Buganda provides an advantageous context in which to examine the opposition between colonial invention and deeply rooted cultural tradition. An analysis of the religious and cultural changes during this period reveals that while late nineteenth and early twentieth century Buganda witnessed a transformation in both the authority and the representation of royal power, the *process* by which Ganda political practices had to be reestablished anew at the death of each *Kabaka* remained remarkably consistent from the mid-eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. Every moment of succession in the precolonial kingdom involved a process of reimagining political power, and the events of the early colonial period therefore mark not so much a break with earlier processes as much as a continuation of them.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the *Kabaka's* death had usually initiated a period of intense political struggle. Motivated by the desire to secure an elevated position in the kingdom's hierarchical political structure, Buganda's chiefly factions competed for the opportunity to select their choice of successor from a large number of eligible candidates. Once installed, the new *Kabaka* and his supporters faced the challenge of connecting a contentious past with an uncertain present. In late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Buganda, the link between past and present, between the ancient legitimacy of the throne and the emergence of a powerful oligarchy of Ganda chiefs, appeared in an unusual and unprecedented form. The decade preceding the arrival of colonial forces was a time of violent change in Buganda, and Christianity emerged as the idiom through which the new Ganda leaders could claim simultaneously to be the heirs of Ganda tradition and of colonial modernity.

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[1] Hattersley, C.W. *The Baganda at Home* (London, 1908), 7.

In the early colonial period, the spread of Protestant Christianity provided a way for Buganda's new leaders both to secure their status as well as increase the kingdom's territory. Christianity, however, spread in Buganda not just as a text of beliefs, but appeared in the clothes people wore, the types of food eaten at royal feasts, and the kinds of materials used to build a house or church. Changes in Ganda dress, eating habits, architecture, and royal ceremonies therefore revealed how Baganda living in the capital incorporated Christianity into their lives and, in the process, spread the religion into outlying districts. Rather than representing a radical shift in Ganda political and social discourse, however, these changes represented the outcome of the leading Christian chiefs' creative renovation of Ganda tradition. In their efforts to make Buganda modern by making Christianity traditional, the ruling Ganda chiefs drew on a rich set of discursive practices whose roots lay deep in the history of Ganda social and political thought.

1 • Tradition and Colonial Rule

During the last two decades scholars of Africa have directed significant attention to probing the relationship between the precolonial and colonial periods. The genesis of this attention can in many ways be traced to the publication in 1983 of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition*. In his contribution to this influential volume, Ranger argued that the colonial period in Africa witnessed the proliferation of a variety of invented traditions that bore little or no resemblance to previous cultural or political practices. The introduction of colonial rule, noted Ranger, not only resulted in the inclusion of Africans in imported European inventions of identity, but also inspired the invention of African traditions such as ethnicity, customary law, and traditional religion. Unable to draw any connections between British and African political, social, and legal systems, British officials "set about inventing African tradition for Africans," and in the process transformed flexible custom into hard tradition. Whereas in precolonial Africa identities were multiple and fluid, Ranger contended, African identities in the colonial period became rigid and were confined by the boundaries of invented tradition.[2] Significantly, Ranger's

[2] Ranger, Terence. "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983) 212.

analysis of the invented character of African traditions reproduced the then widely held assumption that a clear divide with the past appeared in Africa and that this rupture corresponded to the rift between precolonial and colonial societies.[3]

While Ranger's chapter in the book drew attention to the changes that accompanied colonial rule, his analysis overemphasized the colonial state's ability to dictate the direction of these transformations. Some of the recent literature has begun to correct the one-sidedness of Ranger's argument,[4] and Ranger himself has acknowledged the shortcomings of his initial statement. In "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa," Ranger reexamined and modified the ideas he had presented ten years earlier.[5] The term "invention," Ranger noted, compromised his argument in that it presented a static picture of the traditions that emerged in colonial Africa and did not allow for the "reimagining" of these traditions during the colonial period itself. By substituting the term "imagined" for "invented," Ranger sought to emphasize how "traditions imagined by whites were re-imagined by blacks" and "traditions imagined by particular black interest groups were re-imagined by others."[6] However, despite making these modifications to his initial statement, Ranger still maintained that "a real change took place in Africa over the [colonial] period and along the lines I suggested [in *The Invention of Tradition*]."[7]

The works of Ranger and others on the invented character of ethnicity, language, law, and religion naturally presented a dilemma for historians of precolonial Africa. If in the context of colonial Africa tradition referred to the outcome of an inventive or imaginative process specific to the colonial period itself, how could historians use the term to speak about Africa's precolonial past? Jan Vansina

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[3] This assumption has by no means disappeared from the more recent literature on colonial history.

[4] See, for example, Karen E. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, 1985); John Lonsdale. "The Moral Economy of Mau Mau," in Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, Book Two (London, 1992), chaps. 11-12; Paul Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Portsmouth, 1995).

[5] Ranger, Terence. "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa" in Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (eds), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa* (London, 1993), 62-111.

[6] Ibid., 81-2. Ranger borrowed the term "imagined" from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, a work that poses an argument similar to Ranger's rupture thesis. Anderson's discussion of the origins of imagined national communities rests on the idea of two significant ruptures in Western Europe society, the first from the religious order and the second from dynastic authority. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York, 1991).

[7] Ibid., 65. In this respect, "Invention Revisited" does not represent a substantial modification of Ranger's initial statement.

addressed this problem in his work on the history of tradition in equatorial Africa.[8] Referring to the precolonial period, Vansina insisted that traditions were not merely invented concepts existing only "in the minds of observers." Equatorial Africa's past, he maintained, illustrated the continuity of a broad cultural tradition "that had its roots 4000-5000 years ago, and that maintained itself by perennial rejuvenation."[9] At the core of this tradition lay a basic set of cognitive representations that informed how Equatorial Africans understood "physical reality" and guided innovations that gave meaning to conditions in the physical realm. These innovations in turn altered "cognitive reality" while at the same time preserving the continuity of a core set of basic cognitive principles. Thus for Vansina "tradition" served as a "self-regulating" process in which equatorial Africans drew on a "concrete set of basic cognitive patterns and concepts" in order to balance the discrepancies that necessarily resulted from the tension between "cognitive" and "physical" reality.[10] The study of continuities, therefore, at the same time involved the study of radical change. Working from this dynamic definition of precolonial tradition, Vansina demonstrated how tradition provided equatorial Africans with a reservoir of flexible values from which they continually sought solutions to new challenges.

In a recently published work, David Schoenbrun depicted a comparable phenomenon for the Great Lakes region.[11] Tracing the complex dynamic of historical transformation in the interlacustrine region, Schoenbrun reached a conclusion similar to Vansina's. The history of the Great Lakes region, he asserted, illustrated an ongoing process of both transformation and deep continuity. Despite the sometimes extreme social and environmental changes, Lakes Africans managed to "[preserve] ancient social, physical, and economic forms" and to "[reinvest] them with new meaning at different times."[12] However, whereas Vansina focused on the fate of tradition itself, Schoenbrun directed attention to how people actively changed traditions in order to meet their material needs and to prosper. At the heart of his

[8] Vansina, Jan. *Paths in the Rainforest: Towards a History of Political Traditions in Equatorial Africa* (London, 1990).
[9] Ibid., xii.
[10] Ibid., 258-9.
[11] Schoenbrun, David. *A Green Place, A Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender, and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century* (Portsmouth, 1998).

account rested the notions of "instrumental" and "creative" power. These conceptual categories referred to the two distinct, but overlapping, ways in which Great Lakes historical actors conceived of and understood power. As such, they corresponded to the "concrete ways in which Great Lakes people controlled others and the language they used to explain how such controls could work."[13] By counterposing practice and discourse at the heart of tradition, Schoenbrun demonstrated how Great Lakes people creatively combined these two elements to meet their changing aspirations and, in so doing, continuously shaped and re-shaped the character of "tradition" itself.

The groundbreaking projects of Vansina and Schoenbrun provided significant insights into the nature of tradition in Africa's ancient past. Rather than clarifying Ranger's claims about the invented character of tradition during the colonial period, these works placed even greater significance on Ranger's point of investigation. If in the past continuities in broad cultural traditions persisted over incredibly long periods of time, the seeming disappearance of these traditions during the colonial period proved even more puzzling.[14] Steven Feierman's *Peasant Intellectuals* presented a perceptive approach for analyzing the relationship between long-standing cultural tradition and colonial rule. In his illuminating analysis of peasant intellectuals in northeastern Tanzania, Feierman explored the seeming contradiction in the continuity for over a hundred years in the central terms in peasant political discourse and the simultaneous changes over the same period in the practice of politics.[15] The key to resolving this dilemma, Feierman noted, lay in understanding the process by which socially central ideas evolved, a task made all the more difficult "when the ideas are treated as objects, divorced from human agency."[16] Consequently, Feierman examined the role that historical actors, in this case peasant intellectuals, played in determining how

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[12] Ibid., 14.
[13] Ibid., 13.
[14] Vansina offered one possible explanation to this problem. In what Ranger later recognized as an "over-endorsement of his argument in *The Invention*," Vansina asserted that the equatorial tradition withered away as a result of colonial domination and the penetration of colonial ideology. The colonial conquest of Africa, he argued, destroyed tradition by stunting the dynamic process that allowed for the persistence of continuities through change. Whereas in the past tradition devised new structures to contend with new situations, after conquest this responsibility fell into the hands of the colonial government. As a result, the traditions of precolonial Africa faded into the unrecoverable past, where they remained even after the emergence of independent African nation-states.
[15] Feierman, Steven. *Peasant Intellectuals* (Madison, 1990).

tradition adapted to changing social and political contexts. Situated at the nexus between power and discourse, peasant intellectuals occupied the ideal interstitial positions in the social structure from which to "mediate the relationship between political language and long-term continuity… ."[17]

By making peasant intellectuals the focus of his study, Feierman presented a framework for understanding the persistence of cultural continuities from the precolonial to the colonial periods. Like Vansina and Schoenbrun, he demonstrated that long-term continuity and active creation were in fact compatible. However, whereas for Vansina the imposition of colonial rule resulted in the destruction of tradition's creative capacities, for Feierman these imaginative possibilities remained at the service of peasant intellectuals. Despite the colonial government's attempts to harden the contours of previously flexible cultural categories, peasant intellectuals continued to invoke old metaphors to explain new situations. Rather than shrinking under the pressures of colonial and postcolonial rule, then, longstanding cultural continuities reappeared in surprisingly new contexts.

As Feierman demonstrated, certain continuities persisted during the colonial period while others seemed to disappear, a phenomenon that appeared consistent with Vansina's and Schoenbrun's depictions of the more distant past. In a recent piece, Feierman sharpened and refined these ideas by examining why particular kinds of cultural domains endured while others came to disappear during the colonial period.[18] He noted how during the conquest period Europeans directed their most brutal attacks on African social institutions toward particular types of practices—those they saw as lacking in rationality. These targets of colonial aggression included the notable realms of spirit mediums and public healers, domains in which women usually occupied the leading positions. As a result, colonial rule resulted in the continuity of patriarchal modes of historical consciousness and the seeming disappearance of historical narratives rooted in the unstable and often nonlinear accounts of female authority. Flustered by the seemingly

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[16] Ibid., 27.
[17] Ibid., 5.
[18] Feierman, Steven. "Colonizers, Scholars, and the Creation of Invisible Histories," in Victorian E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds. *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1999), 182-216.

irrational and ephemeral character of the alternative histories available in the accounts of healers and mediums, academic historians in turn have created historical narratives that are heavily weighted in the direction of masculine and explicitly political forms of authority.

The imposition of colonial rule had a marked effect on the fate of tradition, as Feierman showed. Despite this impact, however, the study of tradition should not be relegated solely to the precolonial period. One way to work across this periodizational divide lies in viewing tradition as residing in the conceptual apparatuses with which Africans frame their perceptions of the social universe in continually changing social contexts. From this perspective, tradition's most significant characteristic is its discursive nature. This representation of tradition proves crucial for understanding phenomena such as the spread of Christianity and European material culture in early colonial Buganda. By locating tradition in Africans' conceptual framing of the social universe, the shortcomings of interpretations which view the adoption of Christianity and European material culture as a dramatic shift in Africans' worldviews become apparent. Such interpretations not only reveal a mistaken understanding of tradition,[19] but also underestimate both its historical depth as well as its ability to accommodate the cultural changes of the colonial period. In the case of Buganda, the historical record reveals a political tradition in which the kingdom's rulers reimagined political practices during the tenuous first year of their rule. Consequently, the cultural and religious changes initiated by Buganda's newly empowered Christian chiefs represent the continuation of a process deeply embedded in Ganda political thought.

2 • The Politics of Succession

As Steven Feierman notes, "informants' discursive accounts of rules are not descriptions of social reality… [but] are [rather] creations meant only for anthropologists as outsiders."[20] A review of Buganda's historical record provides a vivid endorsement of Feirman's point. For the historian in search

[19] The mistake lies in locating tradition in the types of clothes worn, foods eaten, etc. rather than in the conceptual framework that motivates their behavioral choices.
[20] Feierman, 27.

of a set of rules, the history of succession in Buganda appears as a source of puzzlement and confusion.[21] The variation in succession practices defies any attempt to reduce the reality of royal politics to a clearly demarcated list of regulations, and points instead toward the need both to address the problem of succession as a flexible political process and to examine the continuities in the discourse of succession.

The death of the *Kabaka* often initiated a period of political uncertainty in Buganda during which the potential for disorder loomed large. The period between reigns, when all the dead *Kabaka's* chiefs left office, was literally a period without kingship and without political order. With the symbolic and political center of the kingdom unoccupied, the kingdom itself temporarily ceased to exist and the capital became a battleground in which Buganda's chiefly factions competed to install their respective choices as successor. Given the large number of candidates eligible for the throne and the political benefits that a chiefly faction received by placing its candidate on the throne, the potential for civil war always accompanied the process of selecting a new *Kabaka.*[22]

The period immediately following the *Kabaka's* death represented a crucial stage in the succession process. Palace officials tried to keep the news of the *Kabaka's* death a secret as long as possible in order to give the *Katikiro* (Chief Minister) time to take measures for guarding the capital.[23] The *Katikiro* hoped to use his position to lead the process of determining the choice as successor and, realizing that if he moved swiftly he might secure a successor who would preserve his own dominant position, usually endeavored to make his decision as quickly as possible.[24] In addition, a quick decision

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[21] Martin Southwold attempted such an undertaking and, although he ultimately reduced succession to a set of rules, realized the tenuous character of his findings. "It seems clear from the historical record," he noted, "that some of the customs have altered over time, [and] this still further reduces the number of cases that can be cited in support of a supposed rule."; see Southwold, Martin. "Succession to the throne in Buganda" in Jack Goody, ed. *Succession to High Office* (Cambridge, 1966), 90.

[22] Theoretically any son or brother of the dead *Kabaka* was eligible for the throne.

[23] Roscoe, John. *The Baganda* (London, 1911), 103.

[24] According to Roscoe and others, after discussing the choice of successor with his two main advisors, the *Katikiro* instructed the *Kasuju* (the territorial chief responsible for observing the behavior of the Princes of the Drum and in an interregnum for advising the *Katikiro* which of them was in his opinion most suitable to be chosen as *Kabaka*) to bring those princes eligible for the throne to the capital, at which point he called a meeting of the principal chiefs and notified them of his decision. Then, after the *Katikiro* and his advisors had made all the appropriate preperations, the *Kabaka's* death was signaled at the capital by the beating of the death rhythm on the royal drum. Roscoe noted that although the reigning king generally made his choice of successor known to the *Katikiro and Kasuju*, these chiefs were not under obligation to fulfill the dead *Kabaka's* wishes. For

process also hindered the efforts of the powerful chiefs who inevitably organized factions around their own favorite candidates. Significantly, royal women played a crucial role in this process. No royal clan existed in Buganda, and royal princes therefore adopted their mother's clan affiliation. As a result, at the death of the *Kabaka* princes eligible for the throne sought to garner political and military support by appealing to their mother's relatives, a process in which royal women held considerable leverage.

While the *Katikiro* sought to take the leading part in choosing the new *Kabaka* when the throne fell vacant, the nature of the succession in large part depended on the strength of the chief minister's political support.[25] Here the potential for conflict loomed large, for the choice of *Kabaka* affected a chief's standing in the political order. For example, each *Kabaka* moved the royal capital (*kibuga*) at the beginning of his reign and every few years thereafter. The decision of where to situate the capital in the kingdom, along with the rearrangement of chiefly compounds within it, had a marked impact on a chief's proximity to royal authority. The particular placement of the capital served to enhance the status of some chiefs and render others less powerful.[26] In addition, beginning in the mid-eighteenth century the *Kabaka* maintained the right to directly appoint *saza* chiefs (territorial chiefs), a position that brought with it substantial material rewards. Considering the stakes involved, that fact that a considerable number of *Kabakas* from the mid-eighteenth on acquired the throne by force rather than by peaceful succession should not be surprising.[27] In addition, the installation of a new *Kabaka*, whether the result of a violent or peaceful process, by no means guaranteed an undisturbed reign. Princely rebellion was endemic in Buganda, and strife was especially strong at the start of the reign, when the rivals of the new *Kabaka's*

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description of various aspects of the succession process, see Roscoe, 189; Southwold 88; Benjamin Ray, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship in Colonial Buganda* (Oxford, 1991), 108.

[25] The prominence of the *Katikiro* in the succession process seems to have increased in the nineteenth century. As Michael Twaddle points out, *Katikiro* Sebuko played a crucial role in installing Suna (1836-56) after Kamanya's death. A similar strategic role was played by Kayira when Mutesa (1856-84) assumed the throne after Suna's death as well as by Mukasa when Mwanga succeeded his father Mutesa. See Twaddle, Michael. *Kakungulu and the Creation of Uganda* (Athens, 1993), 34. For the role of Mukasa in Mwanga's installation, see Ray, 113. Holly Hanson connects the growth in the *Katikiro's* power during this period to the increasing importance of trade in the region. As Hanson notes, in the nineteenth century the *Katikiro* assumed the responsibility of managing both the receipt of tribute as well as the distribution of the *Kabaka's* wealth. See Hanson, Holly Elizabeth. *When The Miles Came: Land and Social Order in Buganda, 1850-1928*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Florida (1997), 64.

[26] Hanson, 49.

supporters were likely to fight for another prince before these supporters had had a chance to establish themselves in power.[28]

The history and discourse of succession has significant implications for understanding the cultural and religious changes of the early colonial period. The rapid spread of Christianity first in Mengo and then in the outlying districts coincided with the accession to power of an oligarchy of Christian chiefs and the installation of a new *Kabaka*. As in the past, the *Katikiro* played a crucial role in determining the nature of any changes that might occur in the first several years of a new *Kakaka's* reign, and in the early colonial period the Protestant leader Apolo Kagwa occupied this influential position. Searching for a way both to maintain Buganda's integrity as well as preserve their privileged position in the kingdom's political order, Kagwa and his Protestant cohorts initiated a campaign aimed at tailoring Buganda's political practices to meet the circumstances of the early colonial period.

3 • Defining the Kingdom: Buganda Under British Rule

In 1900 the kingdom of Buganda signed a treaty with the British colonial government that laid the groundwork for the events of the next several decades. The Uganda Agreement was significant in that it accorded Buganda a privileged position in the Uganda protectorate and allowed the kingdom to maintain a semi-autonomous status. In addition, the agreement marked the political victory of a particular group of Ganda leaders—the Protestant chiefs. For although the chiefs who benefited from the agreement included

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[27] See Southwold, 89-97.

[28] Rather than representing exceptional cases, instances of rebellion came to characterize Ganda politics, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, when Jjunju (mid 18th century) succeeded his father Kyabungu, one of the princes launched a rebellion aimed at dethroning the new *Kabaka*. In the battle that ensued, another of Jjungu's brothers, Ssemakokiro, killed the rebel prince and Jjungu maintained his position as the kingdom's leader. Then, in a turn of events typical of Ganda succession wars during this period, Ssemakokiro later killed Jjunju and assumed the throne himself. This pattern of violence continued following Ssemakokiro's death, when Kamanya (1816-36), one of Ssemakokiro's sons, ascended to the *Kabakaship* only after a bitter battle with his brother Mutebi, whom a number of chiefs wished to place on the throne. Princely rebellion also characterized the early period of Mutesa's (1856-84) reign, and a period of violence and instability once again engulfed the kingdom during the turbulent reigns of Mwanga (1884-88, 1892-97) and the brief periods of rule of Kiwewa and Kalema. See Roscoe, 225-26; Southwald, 115-19; for Mutesa's reign, see Rowe, John A. *Revolution in Buganda 1856-1900. Part One: The Reign of Mukabya Mutesa, 1856-1884*. Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin (1966), 36-39. For a discussion of Mwanga's rule and its aftermath—the period of the so-called "Christian Revolution"—see Rowe, John A. "The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court," *Journal of African History* 5:1 (1964), 55-71 and "The Baganda Revolutionaries *Tarikh* 3:2 (1970), 34-46; also Wrigley, Christopher. "The Christian Revolution in Buganda," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2 (1959), 33-48.

members of the Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim factions of chiefly authority, the dominant position within the ruling elite belonged to Apolo Kagwa and his Protestant cohorts.

Significantly, the roots of the Protestant ascent to power lay in the Buganda succession war of 1888-92, an extended battle fought between Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim aspirants for control of the *Kabakaship*. Rather than representing the outcome of an already existing sense of religious factionalism, however, the succession war actually motivated the development of ill feelings between the three major religious groups.[29] The war culminated with the Battle of Mengo in 1892, in which the Protestants, led by Kagwa and supported by British colonial forces headed by Frederick Lugard, took control of the kingdom.

In the aftermath of the civil war, the Protestants, the smallest party of all, secured the dominant position in the Uganda Protectorate that the British declared in 1893. The ascent of the Protestants resulted in the confinement of Muslim influence to a remote section of the country and forced the Catholics, the party with the largest number of adherents, to accept a minority position in the political system. After an unsuccessful rebellion in 1897 by *Kabaka* Mwanga, who was at that point little more than a puppet leader, Kagwa led the Christian chiefs in the installation of the one-year old Daudi Chwa to the throne. Supported by colonial officials, Kagwa then appointed himself as one of the *Kabaka's* regents, along with the Protestant Zakaria Kisingiri and the Catholic Stanislas Mugwanya.

Kagwa had risen to the forefront of Ganda politics, and the Uganda Agreement of 1900 reinforced his position as the wielder of authority in the kingdom. Under the terms of the agreement, Kagwa and the other leading chiefs transformed the *Lukiko*—the assembly of chiefs that had prior to this period gathered to attend to the whims of the *Kabaka*—into a legislative body from which they dictated the kingdom's policies. In addition, the agreement called for the distribution of free-hold "mailo" estates, a process dominated by Buganda's leading Christian chiefs. In the aftermath of the Agreement, the leading

[29] Pirouet, Louise. *Black Evangelists* (London, 1978), 4; also see Michael Twaddle, "The Emergence of Politico-Religious Groupings in Late Nineteenth-Century Buganda," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988), 84.

Christian chiefs gave themselves eight thousand square miles of some of the best land in Buganda and also distributed plots of land to almost 4000 other chiefs and figures of authority in the kingdom.[30]

The Uganda Agreement played a significant role in the Christian chiefs' creative renovation of tradition during the early colonial period. By providing Kagwa and his cohorts the authority to allocate land, the terms of the agreement drew on a metaphor that stretched deep into the Ganda past and which lay at the very soul of chiefship: land as a medium for social justice. Since at least the mid-eighteenth century Baganda had used land allocation as a means to define relationships between people in the kingdom. The power to allocate land provided a Muganda with the authority to rule over the people who cultivated on that land. This patron-client relationship, known as *kusenga*, tied men and women to their chiefs and granted political status to those with the authority to allot land. It is important to note that *kusenga* linked people in a reciprocal relationship in which chiefs relied on the political allegiance of their followers, who in return expected to be rewarded accordingly and always retained the right to leave. In this way, the power to allocate land provided a Muganda both with elevated status and the ability to attract followers, but also carried with it a significant set of responsibilities.[31]

In the aftermath of the Uganda Agreement, the leading Christian chiefs attempted to use the power to distribute land in a similar fashion to their chiefly predecessors. By drawing the connection between control over land and religious allegiance, the ruling Ganda chiefs sought to translate the new order of power in the kingdom using the familiar "idiom of land as power."[32] Although the granting of *mailo* estates represented a new form of land allocation, the Ganda ideas concerning the connection between land, power, and social responsibility embedded in this process resonated with a deep tradition of Ganda political and social thought. The initial incorporation of Christianity in the structures of the kingdom, in other words, represented a continuity of Ganda tradition rather than the emergence of a new conceptual

[30] Hanson, 2. Also see Young, 207. For an overview of the events of the late quarter of the nineteenth century, see Pirouet, 3-11; Young, 193-210; Twaddle, Michael. "The Bakungu Chiefs of Buganda Under British Colonial Rule, 1900-1930," *Journal of African History* 10:2 (1969), 309-22.
[31] Hanson, chapters 2-3.
[32] Ibid., 4.

universe.[33] In the years following the violent civil wars of the 1890s, Christianity emerged as a means for Ganda chiefs to connect the legitimacy of their rule to older Ganda ideas about power and society.

4 • The Changing Face of Mengo

While the violence of the late 1880s and early 1890s resulted in significant adjustments in the Ganda political order, the manner in which the Ganda leaders affected and consolidated these changes required a much more subtle strategy. The Protestant chiefs who assumed power after their victory in the Battle of Mengo in 1892 had neither the ability nor the desire to enforce their rule through military might. Catholics still outnumbered Protestants and the exalted status of the Protestant leaders rested on tenuous footing. In an effort to fortify their position in the historically competitive Ganda political system, the leading Ganda chiefs initiated a cultural campaign aimed at connecting the ancient legitimacy of the throne with their newly found political influence. The first undertakings of this campaign appeared in Mengo, the royal capital and the locus of all quests for power.

After the Battle of Mengo, the victorious Ganda chiefs decided to build a great cathedral in Mengo to replace the one that had previously functioned as the center of Protestant devotion. The chiefs' followers built the new cathedral out of reed and grass, rebuilt it in 1894 after it tumbled to the ground, and after several years of use the structure once again showed signs of decay. Consequently, with *Kabaka* Mwanga in exile and the infant Daudi Chwa on the throne, Apolo Kagwa and the principal Ganda chiefs initiated an effort to build a new cathedral in 1901. The new cathedral proved to be an enormous public undertaking, as Kagwa insisted that it be constructed out of bricks. The missionary K.E. Borup erected a huge brick-making machine, and scores of laborers marched into clay pits to fetch the material needed for the estimated one million bricks.[34] Much to the missionaries' delight, the Baganda themselves bore the cost of the new cathedral and, in the words of the CMS missionary Mrs. A.B. Fraser, the labor was "given

[33] Despite this continuity in the early part of the twentieth century, the implementation of the Uganda Agreement did seriously undermine Ganda ideas about *kusenga* in the decades that followed. For a discussion of the implications of the agreement in the middle colonial period, see Hanson, chapter 3.

[34] Mullins, J.D.Y. *The Wonderful Story of Uganda* (London, 1904), 111-113.

free."[35] What Mrs. Fraser meant by "given free" was that the great chiefs allowed their clients to labor in the construction of the church in lieu of their paying rent. In the years immediately following the Uganda Agreement, Baganda treated the hut tax and chiefs' requests for rent payments as a form of tribute similar to requests in the past, and they therefore responded enthusiastically to the option of paying these fees with one month's labor rather than in rupees.[36] Therefore, more than just the mechanical process of supplying the material necessary to produce bricks, fetching clay was a display of political allegiance and an indication of the influence of the leading Ganda chiefs.

The significance of the cathedral's construction in the eyes of the Baganda rested on the political meanings attached to communal labor in precolonial Buganda. The association between public labor and royal authority stretched deep into the kingdom's past, particularly with respect to the laborious activities of building roads and maintaining the *Kabaka's* enclosure. In the precolonial kingdom, each district chief was responsible for maintaining in good order a road reaching from the capital to his county seat. When these roads needed repair, the *Katikiro* sent orders into every part of the country requesting people to report to the capital, at which point the *Katikiro's* messenger collected a payment of twenty-five cowry shells from each house. The *Kabaka* received two-thirds of these shells and the *Katikiro* divided the remaining one-third between himself, the chiefs who supplied the labor, and the person in charge of overseeing the workers.[37] Considering the political relationships involved in the maintenance of Buganda's roads, the condition of a road often served as "a barometer reflecting the condition of royal control."[38] Under the control of a strong *Kabaka*, Buganda's roads remained well maintained. However, when royal power deteriorated so too did the condition of the kingdom's roads.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries royal authorities adopted a similar method to obtain labor for the building of the royal enclosure. The *Katikiro* allocated certain buildings in the enclosure to each *Saza* chief (district chief) who then assumed responsibility for keeping his allotted sections in

[35] *Journal of Mrs. A.B. Fraser*, March 21, 1901. Church Missionary Society Archives (CMSA) G3 A7/02-03.
[36] Hanson, 140-142.

satisfactory condition. When a house needed rebuilding, the *Kabaka* appointed an overseer who consulted the *Saza* chief concerned and settled with him the number of men required for the work. In addition, chiefs supplied the labor force responsible for building the elaborate fences that enclosed each layer of buildings in the palace. In situations where a chief could not secure the necessary laborers to build a house in the royal enclosure, he asked the *Kabaka* to excuse him and offered to pay a fine in default. If the *Kabaka* refused to accept the offer, he deposed the chief and gave his chieftainship to someone else.[39] Communal labor therefore served as a demonstration of political allegiance and administrative competence. In precolonial Buganda, work revealed a relationship of allegiance both between a chief and his followers and also between a chief and the *Kabaka.* Consequently, a chief's inability to secure the necessary labor for public projects either reflected his weakness as a royal representative or served as a sign of chiefly resistance, and in the competitive world of Ganda politics, the *Kabaka* could not afford to tolerate such displays of vulnerability.[40]

The building of the cathedral therefore resonated with a familiar Ganda political discourse that connected public service to royal power. In addition, the timing of the cathedral's construction further reinforced its significance with respect to Ganda politics. Less than a year earlier Buganda's leading chiefs had signed the Uganda Agreement, a document that confirmed the Protestants' ascent to power and relegated the larger Catholic faction to a minority position in the political system. The agreement represented the culmination of the Protestant chiefs' victory in the succession war of the early 1890s and their deposing of Mwanga and installation of his young son Daudi Chwa in 1897. Viewed within this context, the cathedral's construction constituted an example of a protracted succession struggle. In an effort common to all Baganda leaders in the tenuous first years of their rule, the newly empowered

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[37] Roscoe, 243.
[38] Rowe, *Revolution in Buganda*, 14.
[39] Roscoe, 269-70.
[40] For example, in a final attempt to consolidate his authority, *Kabaka* Mwanga attempted to have his people dig a large artificial lake in the capital, a burden that Kagwa identified as the cause of the revolt against the *Kabaka.* In addition, in 1892 Muslim and Catholic chiefs protested what they perceived as the allocation of an unfair amount of land to Protestant chiefs by refusing to provide people to work for the *Kabaka.* See Hanson, 71, 96.

Protestant chiefs sought to solidify their positions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a site of Anglican devotion, Namirembe cathedral further elevated the Protestant chiefs to the forefront of Ganda politics at the expense of their Catholic counterparts. In this respect, the impetus for the cathedral's construction lay as much in the rich tradition of Ganda political thought as in missionaries' notion of Christian devotion.

While the building of the cathedral represented the continuation of a longstanding Ganda political tradition, a revealing incident during the construction, however, reflected the specific way in which colonial rule affected Ganda politics. In a public display of virtue directed as much towards European as Baganda eyes, the *Katikiro* Kagwa and some of the other great chiefs occasionally went themselves to carry clay from the swamps to the brick fields, while their wives led the women to fetch firewood for burning the bricks.[41] The actions of these chiefs and their wives caused quite a stir in Mengo, prompting young Ganda house boys to ask permission to go to the site to witness the momentous event.[42] The efforts of these Ganda chiefs also endeared them in the eyes of the missionaries, who marveled at "a sight the angels must have rejoiced over, to see the greatest chief in the land [Kagwa] carrying on his head … loads of clay for the House of God."[43]

The symbolic significance of the cathedral's construction, however, extended beyond the missionaries' narrow view. The construction had a specifically Bugandan meaning in that it symbolized the fortification of a new political order in Buganda. The cathedral represented the efforts of Kagwa and the other principal chiefs to legitimate their positions by situating this new order both in terms of Ganda tradition and the emerging colonial order. The groundbreaking ceremony on June 18, 1901 indicated the delicate balance between Ganda chiefs and colonial officials on which the new political order rested. A large crowd that included the Assistant District Commissioner for Mengo District and other colonial officials from Kampala gathered to witness the five-year old *Kabaka* lay the foundation for the cathedral.

[41] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, April 1901, 45.
[42] *Journal of Mrs. A.B. Fraser*, March 21, 1901. CMSA G3 A7/02-03.

The Reverend Ernest Millar followed with a religious ceremony, after which the Ganda chiefs and the Europeans retired to the neighboring school for refreshments.[44]

The cathedral at Namirembe, both as a physical structure and in its symbolic significance, confirmed and legitimized Protestant hegemony in the Ganda political. The cathedral became a forum in which those who gathered for services both bore witness to this new order and also sought to establish their positions within the system. The regents and the heads of counties were allotted seats and the *Kabaka* had his own place opposite the British bishop's throne. All other worshippers carried their own seats to church with the exception of the chiefs, who had a young boy or girl shoulder this burden for them.[45]

Participation in Sunday services at Namirembe cathedral both affirmed a person's place in the political order recognized by colonial officials and validated the changes that had occurred over the last decade. The Baganda's use of the cathedral as a public forum for the enactment of social change had a noticeable effect on Ganda devotional practices. Much to the distress of some of the missionaries, the Baganda virtually neglected private prayer in their own homes, and almost all devotion took place within the confines of church.[46] The role that women assumed in Sunday services further reinforced the cathedral's significance in Mengo society. Prominent in missionaries' observations were comments that referred to the large number of women who attended services. In addition to constituting a large proportion of the congregation, women sat in the presence of their husbands, a stark contrast to earlier practices.[47] The women's eagerness for a greater role in the public forum extended beyond Sunday services at the cathedral. Some women began to sit with the leading chiefs at the feasts that became popular in Mengo on Christmas and other religious occasions, and one leading Christian chief went to

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[43] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, July 1901, 62.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Hattersley, 202.
[46] Hall, F.E.R. *In Full and Glad Surrender: The Story of the Life and Work of Martin J. Hall* (London, 1905) 245.
[47] Hattersley, 92-5.

"the length of allowing his wife to walk down the street with him and even allowed her to take his arm."[48] In addition, missionaries reported how young women, often to their husbands' displeasure, responded enthusiastically to opportunities to read for baptism.[49]

The enthusiasm that women displayed in attending services indicated that the cathedral, and Christianity in general, provided the means through which women attempted to transform the gender configuration of Ganda society and to vie for greater participation in the public sphere. The efforts of these Christian women, however, were not a wholly new activity. The eagerness that women displayed for participation in Christian practices represented a translation of a long-running tension in Ganda society between royal power and public healing.[50] In precolonial Buganda *lubaale* (spiritual forces with a greater-than-local influence), a cultural arena dominated by women, was one of the most significant sources of influence and power that eluded the control of the *Kabaka*. With the violent suppression of this female domain of public power during the colonial period, many women turned to Christianity in an effort to reclaim the influence they had lost.

Ganda responses to missionary endeavors were gendered in other significant areas, too. In her perceptive analysis of Ganda reactions to missionary medical practices, Luise White explored how Baganda reinterpreted missionary medical techniques and treatments according to local ideas of health and healing. Baganda decisions to seek a particular treatment or a specific type of medication, she noted, drew on a discursive practice in which curing took place on or above the skin. In this way, Ganda ideas about healing, specifically the application of medicine, shaped how Baganda responded to missionary medical practices. Significantly, in a series of interviews concerning the connection between the introduction of Western biomedicine and the emergence of African vampire (*bazimoto*) stories, White discovered that Ganda men and women told different stories about anesthesia and *bazimoto*. Whereas men described the experience of being captured by *bazimoto* as resulting in impotence, women remarked

[48] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, October 1901, 81.
[49] For example, see Hall, 238, 245.

that the effects of *bazimoto* rendered captured women unable to speak again.[51] As with ideas about wealth and power, notions of gender and health informed the creative renovation of Ganda tradition during the colonial period.

Clothing represented one way in which both women and men confirmed their right to attend services at Namirembe cathedral and also sought to attract attention in church. Every person who attended services was "decently dressed" and "scrupulously clean," and nobody dared to enter the church wearing a bark-cloth. Women wore brightly colored Victorian-style dresses, while men sported white *kanzus* and English boots. The use of clothing to reflect gradations of status extended into arenas outside of the church. In the capital "none but the commoner" wore bark-cloth. Prominent men dressed in cotton trousers and a vest or shirt with a *kanzu* and chiefs often purchased knickers and coats. Baganda at the capital also used clothing as a means through which to renegotiate status. Goatherds demanded that they be clothed with cotton garments, while women insisted that the banana supply would stop and they would no longer cultivate if they were not supplied with white calico or colored clothes.[52]

While European clothing became a measure of one's rank in the new political order, the use of clothing as social marker was not a new phenomenon in Buganda. The Baganda had used clothing and other accessories to distinguish particular social groups long before the arrival of British missionaries and colonial officials. For example, in the past members of the royal court reserved the privilege of paring one's nails to a point and wearing brass and copper rings around the ankles,[53] and royal ladies distinguished themselves from others by wearing a dark girdle of bark cloth around their robe.[54] In addition, the *Kabaka's* retainers wore a special dress of antelope skin tied around the waist with a plantain fiber, and the royal gatekeepers as well as those of the leading chiefs wore "finely-dressed skins."[55]

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[50] For a discussion of these tensions, see Schoenbrun, 184-206.
[51] White, Luise. "'They Make Their Victims Dull': Genders and Genres, Fantasies and Cures in Colonial Southern Uganda," *American Historical Review* 100:5 (1995), 1379-1402.
[52] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, October 1901, 93, 109.
[53] Ashe, Robert Pickering. *Two Kings of Uganda* (London, 1970), 79; Roscoe, 24.
[54] Hall, 177-8.
[55] Roscoe, 201.

Finally, only chiefs wore skin without hair, and any chief engaged in business for the king wore a cow or hyena skin as sign of respect.[56] Rather than introducing a new set of rules, then, European clothing added new variations to the longstanding practice of reflecting status through clothing. The adoption of European clothing therefore represented less the loss of tradition than the outcome of a continuation in Ganda political and cultural thought. Tradition did not reside in Victorian-style dresses, waistcoats, and knickers, but rather inhered in the conceptual framework within which Baganda perceived their decisions to adopt European fashion. And as in the past, tradition and innovation once again proved compatible.

Sunday services did not serve as the only opportunity for Baganda living in the capital to dress up and present themselves at Namirembe cathedral. In a curious development during the early colonial period, the ceremonialism surrounding the figure of the *Kabaka* increased as the influence of the *Kabaka* himself diminished. Beginning in 1900 Kagwa inaugurated the custom of celebrating annually the *Kabaka's* accession to the throne.[57] The first of these ceremonies took place on August 14 in a formal service held in Namirembe cathedral. Royal servants carried the *Kabaka*, the Queen Mother, and the queen sister to the ceremony, while Kagwa made an imposing entrance on horseback. Only those dressed in white cloth were allowed to attend the ceremony, at which the young *Kabaka* made a thanks-offering of a tusk of ivory and ten thousand shells to the Church.[58]

In addition to the annual accession ceremony, the leading chiefs in Mengo also introduced the practice of celebrating the *Kabaka's* birthday. As with the accession ceremony, the *Kabaka's* birthday celebration began with a thanksgiving service in Namirembe cathedral followed by a reception at the royal palace. At the reception in 1901 a banner hung above the *Kabaka's* enclosure that read in Luganda, "O God Keep Daudi," while in the reception house two Union Jacks and a large motto reading "O God Keep Buganda" hung above the *Kabaka's* seat. Kagwa and the Roman Catholic regent flanked the *Kabaka* on either side, and the Queen Sister and two princes sat in front of him on the leopard skin that

[56] Kagwa, Apolo. *The Customs of the Baganda* tranl. by Ernest B. Kalibala (New York, 1969), 135.

had long been the symbol of royalty.[59] Nowhere could the representational bricolage of Ganda tradition, Christianity, and colonial force on which the power of Kagwa and the other Christian chiefs rested be more elegantly expressed.

The annual celebration of the Daudi Chwa's accession and the other royal ceremonies introduced during this period represented the attempts of Kagwa and the other Ganda chiefs to use royal ceremony as an expression of the ancient legitimacy of the throne. By promoting the young *Kabaka's* legitimacy, the leading Ganda chiefs sought to promote and uphold their positions at the apex of the Ganda political order. The chiefs' efforts take on greater significance when viewed as part of the protracted succession struggle of the 1890s. In situating the royal ceremonies in the site of Anglican devotion—Namirembe cathedral—Kagwa and his Protestant cohorts further fortified their political standing *vis-à-vis* the Catholic chiefly faction. Royal ritual therefore functioned as a means not only of reflecting political change but also of transacting it, a political process whose historical precedents lie in the history of Ganda political thought.

A celebratory feast at the *Kabaka's* palace followed all of the royal rituals that took place in Namirembe cathedral. While the *Kabaka's* birthday celebration had been a feature of Ganda royal ritual since Daudi Chwa's accession in 1897, the chiefs altered the appearance of the celebration in 1900. Whereas in previous years the chiefs had invited only the colonial officials and missionaries living in the capital to join them in an informal feast of meat and plantains, in 1900 they invited all Europeans living in Uganda for a reception and lunch. Royal servants decorated the lunchroom with palms, flowers, and red and white cloths. In addition, they set up two tables with a chair for each guest as well as knives, forks, plates, and serviettes made of linen. At the head of one table sat the *Kabaka*, with Kagwa acting as his host, while Kangawo, one of the other regents, hosted the other table. The menu for the lunch consisted of an assortment of European delicacies and Ganda staples: fish, soup, omelets, plantains, peas, fowl,

[57] Roscoe notes that in the precolonial kingdom it was customary from "time to time" for the *Kabaka* to give a feast to his people to celebrate his accession. Roscoe, 213.

potatoes, curried rice, tinned fruits, jam, biscuits, sago pudding, cheese, tea, and lime juice. The European-style feast impressed the missionaries, who found particular pleasure in the fact that "the idea emanated with and was carried out entirely by the chiefs, chiefly by the *Katikiro* [Kagwa], and the other regents, who are very anxious to adopt English methods."[60] Like the royal services in Namirembe cathedral, the feasts that followed these services further solidified the link between Daudi Chwa's legitimacy, the right of Kagwa and his fellow Christian chiefs to their positions of power, and the spread of Christianity and European material culture. This subtle interplay between the chiefs' presentation of Ganda tradition and the missionaries' vision of Christian enlightenment appeared in the comment that followed a description of the celebratory luncheon in a CMS newspaper: "May he [Daudi Chwa] be long spared to rule the Baganda in accordance with the will of Him who has so greatly blessed his people and raised them to such a high level as compared with the surrounding nations."[61]

When the European guests departed from the *Kabaka's* birthday celebration in 1900, the leading chiefs hosted another feast for the Queen Mother, the queen sisters, and the head chiefs who were not of high enough rank to be admitted to the first feast. The guests at this second feast ate plantains and drank *mukisi* - banana beer. A similar episode occurred when Kagwa, in yet another effort to reinforce his position by legitimizing Daudi Chwa's right to the throne, invited the CMS missionary Hattersley to photograph Chwa visiting his exiled father's tomb. After the performance of the 'traditional' ceremony in Mutesa's tomb, the chiefs and Europeans enjoyed tea and cake in the courtyard of Mutesa's queen sister while the commoners made do with banana beer and sugar cane.[62] Like clothing, food served as a means of elevating some Baganda over others as well as marking a distinction between the Baganda and their neighbors, both in the eyes of the Baganda and the Europeans.

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[58] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, September 1900, 17.
[59] Ibid., September 1901, 74-5; September 1902, 61.
[60] Ibid., August 1900, 15-16.
[61] Ibid., 16.
[62] Hattersley, 17.

The hosting of feasts occurred on occasions other than those surrounding royal ritual. Feasts became increasingly fashionable in Mengo at Christmas time and other special occasions. In November, 1900 Bartolomeye, one of the two ordained Baganda men in Mengo, invited all the Europeans to his daughter's baptism feast. Inspired by the feast given on the *Kabaka's* birthday, he borrowed teacups, plates, knives, and forks from the mission. The leading chiefs joined the Europeans as guests at Bartolomeye's rejoicing, while the chiefs' wives and other Baganda ate at the "crowded native feast."[63] Mika Sematimba, a leading Ganda chief, hosted a similar feast in 1901 on the anniversary of his wedding day. The *Katikiro*, the other regents, and most of the great chiefs attended the celebration, at which Sematimba's wife, much to the delight of the missionaries, sat at the table with the chiefs while they ate.[64]

While CMS missionaries marveled at the "progress" displayed by the leading chiefs at these European-style feasts, the political implications of these festive gatherings were not directed solely towards European gazes. Feasts and celebrations had long functioned as a political idiom in Buganda, albeit under somewhat different circumstances. In the nineteenth century Buganda's military power exceeded that of its neighbors, and *Kabakas* Suna and Mutesa conducted numerous military campaigns in which the Baganda ransacked their neighbors for slaves and other valuable spoils. Rather than being hoarded by the *Kabaka* and the chiefs, however, the booty acquired in these campaigns was "converted into prestige and obligation by distribution in triumphant feasts and celebrations."[65] These feasts drew on an ancient connection between feasting and the affirmation of leadership.[66] Generosity with food signaled a display of wealth and feasting ceremonies presented opportunities for the creation, maintenance, or renegotiation of social and political obligations. In addition, feasting joined together redistributive and eating metaphors. When a *Kabaka* ascended to the throne, he participated in a ceremony in which he

[63] *Journal of Mrs. A.B. Glass*, December 8, 1900. CMSA G3 A7/02-03.
[64] Ibid., January 4, 1901. CMSA G3 A7/02-03.
[65] Young, 196-97.
[66] Schoenbrun notes that agricultural festivals existed in Masharike Bantu times, 106.

"ate" the nation, a metaphor whose roots stretched deep into the Great Lakes past.[67] In this context, "eating" evoked the notion of "consumption" and carried important ideas about power.[68] Thus a Muganda teacher/evangelist working in Toro complained of being constantly accused by Batoro of having come to "eat up" their country.[69] Finally, eating metaphors also evoked cooking and serving languages. In Luganda the verb used when a man marries is *okuwasa*— "to cause someone to peel bananas." The verb used for a woman's marriage is passive, *okufumbirwa*— "to become the cook (for someone else)."[70] Thus when Ganda leaders and followers participated in public feasting ceremonies, they drew on an ancient metaphor connecting wealth, power, and eating.

In the nineteenth century, these redistributive feasts followed a practice in which the returned chiefs lined up in order of rank and approached the *Kabaka* in the hopes of drinking out of a large pot of beer located in front of the monarch. As each chief took the ladle, he turned to his companions and asked their permission to drink the beer. If the chief "had performed bravely in the war" his associates called out "drink," at which point the chief consumed the beer and the next person in line came forward. However, if the onlooking chiefs denied their associate permission to drink, the police seized the chief and held him for trial. When the last person in line had performed the procedure, all of the chiefs who had passed the test accompanied the *Katikiro* to a celebratory feast.[71] In this way, the feast and its accompanying ceremonies offered chiefs the chance to ostracize and or to include people, and a chief's participation in these feasts therefore served as a sign of his allegiance to the *Kabaka* and also reflected his status in the political order. In addition to the post-war feasts, in the mid-nineteenth century Mutesa initiated the practice of inviting his chiefs to royal dinners, at which the chiefs sat according to rank and consumed a variety of meats and other delicacies.[72] Thus, feasting served as a type of political transaction

[67] For example, in the Kivu Rift Valley the oldest agricultural festival was the *kurya mwaka* ("eat the new year") celebration. See Schoenbrun, 149.
[68] White, 1380 n.3.
[69] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, April 1902, 28.
[70] Qtd. in Hanson, 15.
[71] Roscoe, 361.
[72] Kagwa, 88.

in which the *Kabaka* sought to secure political allegiance and Buganda's leaders vied to establish their positions in the political order. Consequently, as celebrations of baptisms, wedding anniversaries, and religious holidays gained in popularity in Mengo, the feasts surrounding these occasions represented the adaptation of a long-standing Ganda political practice to the particular circumstances of colonial rule.

Rather than representing the triumph of European neo-tradition over Ganda custom, the feasts in Mengo reflected the influence of missionaries and colonial officials on the longstanding process of legitimating power during a new administration's initial years of rule. Tradition did not simply consist of the types of food consumed and the form of etiquette adopted, but rather lay embedded in the conceptual framework that informed the chiefs' perception of their decision to host European-style feasts. Like the construction of Namirembe cathedral and the adoption of Western fashions, the historical precedents of the political processes embedded in the Mengo feasts stretched deep into Buganda's past, and even further into the general history of the Great Lakes region as well as the ancient history of Mashariki Bantu.[73] The colonial encounter was not a confrontation between Ganda tradition and colonial modernity, an epic struggle between mutually exclusive and competing forces. The cultural innovations that occurred in Mengo and elsewhere connected old ideas about wealth and power to the realities of the colonial situation. In this way, tinned fruits and *mukisi* (banana beer) proved compatible counterparts and came to occupy similar, rather than distinct, fields of discourse. As illustrated in the case of Buganda, African and European visions often complemented each other, and not necessarily at the expense of African tradition.

5 • Witnessing the Lord's Power: Buganda in the Eyes of the Missionaries

The relationship between the cultural innovation spearheaded by the Ganda chiefs in Mengo and the emerging colonial order appeared in the missionaries' contrasting attitudes towards the Baganda and towards their neighbors in the lakes region. CMS missionaries applauded the remarkable "progress" the Baganda demonstrated in comparison to their neighbors. C.W. Hattersley commented that the Nandi and

[73] For the role of feasts in Great Lakes tradition, see Schoenbrun, 105-106, 149, 254-56.

Kavirondo were "still savage,"[74] while the Revered J.J. Willis wrote that the Kavirondo showed up "at an immense disadvantage… by side of the naturally courteous Muganda."[75] After visiting Nasa and Usambiro, the CMS missionary K. Borup concluded that there was "a great difference … between the Baganda and the people of Nasa. The Baganda are much the superior race."[76] Similar observations praising the Baganda at the expense of their neighbors throughout the region filled missionary memoirs, newspapers, and personal correspondences during this period.

Perhaps more revealing than the high esteem with which the missionaries held the Baganda were the reasons the missionaries presented to justify their opinions. Hattersley characterized the Nandi as "the lowest of uncivilized people" because "none of them have any clothing whatever"[77]; Borup pointed out that the differences between the Baganda and the people of Nasa were "seen clearly in their modes of dress and housebuilding, as well as in the various implements they make"[78]; and Martin Hall remarked that the Basogo drank and smoked hemp in contrast to the Christian Baganda in Mengo.[79] Bishop Alfred Tucker's visit to the kingdom of Ankole in 1899 further illustrated the extent to which the CMS missionaries placed the Baganda at the forefront of the Christian civilizing mission. Commenting on his meeting with Kiwaya, the King of Ankole, his *Katikiro* Baguta, and a number of other chiefs, Tucker noted that he immediately recognized that "Baguta, and not the king, was the man with who we should have to deal." Tucker characterized Baguta as a "progressive," and explained "[the] term [progressive], I think, fairly describes his intellectual position … He has discarded to a large extent the dress, or rather undress, of the Bahuma, and generally appears clad like a Muganda. His household is arranged after the fashion of the Baganda."[80]

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[74] Hattersley, 28.
[75] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, March 1908, 27.
[76] Ibid., November 1900, 27.
[77] Hattersley to Parent Committee CMS, August 16, 1911. CMSA G3 A7/10.
[78] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, November 1900, 27.
[79] Hall, 204.
[80] Tucker, Alfred. "A Missionary Journal Through Ankole," 1899. CMSA G3 A7/01.

As illustrated in Tucker's comments, adopting Christianity and its outward markings offered many advantages for the Baganda other than spiritual salvation, especially in the context of the emerging colonial order in Uganda. However, the missionary perspective must not be confused with that of the Baganda leaders, for the chiefs who initiated these cultural changes in Mengo did not picture their behaviors simply in terms of the emerging colonial context. In sending out catechists to increase their influence in the surrounding regions, Buganda's leaders pursued longstanding, well-known objectives, not specifically colonial ones. Territorial expansion and imperialism stood at the core of the Ganda tradition that developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the early colonial period witnessed a continuation of this aspect of Ganda political thought. Thus, while the colonial state unquestionably affected the balance of power in the lakes region and had a marked impact on the nature of political practices, it did not shape or direct local political aspirations and visions.

In addition to praising the Baganda for the ways in which they bore the outward markings of Christian progress, CMS missionaries extended their adulation to Buganda as a physical setting. As they fanned out beyond the borders of Buganda, the missionaries compared the orderliness of Buganda to the disarray of surrounding areas. A CMS missionary stationed in Toro wrote that "the scenery of some of the places on the road here [Toro] reminded me very much of the wild parts of south and mid Wales …"[81] In contrast to the wasteland of the outlying areas, Mengo stood as the center of orderliness and civilization, a place where "the enclosures of the great chiefs and the fences of the humblest peasants" illustrated to the missionaries the advanced state of development in Buganda as compared to its neighbors.[82] Nowhere did the CMS missionaries more clearly present this contrast than in the expressions they used to describe the difference between the land of the Baganda and that of the nomadic Bahima. Whereas in Buganda "each house stands in the midst of its garden" and "each man's boundaries

[81] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, July 1902, 46.
[82] Ibid., September 1902, 61.

are clearly defined," in Ankole "people build their huts in little clusters of ten or a dozen and go off to dig exactly where they like."[83]

Unlike many other colonial narratives in which the missionaries credited themselves with infusing order into a chaotic African landscape, the CMS missionaries found in Buganda a recognizable sense of orderliness that required only slight modifications to meet colonial standards. The enclosed, cultivated fields and fenced-in houses of Buganda made a significant impression on the missionaries and affected the ways in which Christianity spread in colonial Uganda. Encouraged by both the orderliness of Buganda and the actions of the Baganda, CMS missionaries promoted a policy of using Baganda catechists to open the doorway for the spread of the Gospel to outlying regions. The missionary John Roscoe praised the work of the Baganda in a letter to the CMS Secretary in London, writing that despite the bleak prospects for the spread of the Gospel in Toro, Bunyoro and Busoga, "the Baganda alone have entered and made ready a path for us … The Baganda need training and guiding still but they are without a doubt the evangelists for Africa …There is not a place we have yet sent Baganda where they have returned saying we can do no good there."[84] As illustrated in Roscoe's comments, CMS missionaries viewed Mengo as the apex of Christian civilization in the lakes region and, at least during this early period, pursued a policy in which the products of this civilization, the Baganda catechists, would spread the Word to the heathen wastelands surrounding Buganda.

The missionaries' affection for the Baganda not only influenced the CMS's proselytizing methods, but also affected the nature of colonial rule in Uganda. In addition to using Baganda teachers to disseminate the Word, the missionaries both supported and promoted the administration's efforts to use the Bugandan administrative system as a model for other kingdoms. In a letter to Archdeacon Walker in 1900, the Governor of Uganda, F.J. Jackson, wrote that "Baganda methods of administration… should be

[83] Ibid., August 1902, 56.
[84] Roscoe to Baylis, June 22, 1900. G3 A7/01.

the standard" and that Mengo "should be an example for Toro, Ankole, [Bu]nyoro, and Busoga."[85] The missionaries agreed with Jackson and, in a policy almost identical to that of the CMS, the colonial government appointed Ganda chiefs to rule over territories outside of Buganda. The colonial administration was thin on the ground in the period prior to World War I, and colonial officials relied on Kagwa to bring the outlying areas under colonial order. Referring to the success of the Ganda chief Semei Kakugulu in introducing cultivation and administrative order in Bukedi, a CMS missionary wrote "the utmost encouragement should be given to these imperial minded chiefs who will be the backbone of Uganda civilization."[86] In the eyes of colonial officials, CMS missionaries, and Ganda royals, administrative order, like Christian civilization, flowed from Mengo outwards. And like the CMS missionaries, the British colonial officials developed an admiration for the Baganda and their administrative methods.

What the British interpreted as the enlargement of colonial influence, however, the Baganda regarded as a continuation in the Ganda tradition of territorial expansion, imperialism, and the extension of power in the region. These contrasting, though complementary, visions influenced the nature of colonial rule as well as missionary expansion in Uganda. When Ganda chiefs and catechists fanned out into the surrounding kingdoms, they carried with them the indistinguishable markings of Christianity, colonial rule, and Ganda imperialism. As a result, missionaries and colonial officials inevitably became implicated in the local politics of the lakes region, a development that had serious consequences for future colonial endeavors.

6 • Spreading the Word: Ganda Catechists Move into the Countryside

Both the colonial regime and the CMS were understaffed in proportion to the goals they sought to achieve. Consequently, as in most parts of colonial Africa they both depended on African initiative, with colonial officials relying on Ganda chiefs and missionaries on Ganda evangelist-teachers. In addition to

[85] F.J. Jackson to Walker, November 6, 1901. CMSA G3 A7/02-03.
[86] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, October 1903, 50.

using Ganda personnel, both the government and the CMS gave primacy to Luganda as the *lingua franca* and based their administrative systems on the Ganda model. In the end, however, the CMS pursued a Ganda-based 'federal policy' more actively than did the government. The mission considered Ganda agents indispensable to their endeavor and maintained a policy of using Ganda catechists in the surrounding kingdoms until 1911.[87]

Given the enthusiasm with which Baganda chiefs living in the capital embraced Christianity, CMS leaders considered themselves fortunate to have the opportunity to enlist the services of such ambitious converts. The instructions of the CMS committee in London to missionaries preparing for the journey to Uganda read, "It has been continually pressed upon missionaries going to Uganda that they should realize how blessed an opportunity they have of leading and helping Native Christians to do a work which elsewhere Europeans have of necessity had far too much to do with their own hands."[88] Thus, for the CMS Buganda represented the ideal opportunity to carry out its commitment to the development of self-governing local churches. As CMS missionaries later learned, however, this idealism rested on an ignorance of local affairs both within Buganda and between Buganda and its neighbors.

Before 1890 few possibilities existed for the expansion of Christianity beyond Mengo. The limited number of missionaries in the area and the turbulent political events of the 1880s confined the activities of the Christian missions to Buganda's capital. These restrictions disappeared with the rise to power of an elite group of Christian chiefs and the restoration of a sense of order in Buganda. Beginning in 1893, Ganda catechists and teachers, encouraged by the kingdom's chiefs, started to spread Christianity to the outlying areas of Buganda and then to the neighboring kingdoms. A variety of factors motivated young Christian readers living in Mengo to become catechists. Working as a catechist was considered a form of permanent employment, a distinction that carried with it an exemption from labor tax.[89] For many the opportunity to become a catechist represented the only chance to make use of their newly

[87] Hansen, Holger Bernt. *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890-1925* (New York, 1984), 368-69.
[88] *Instructions of the Committee to Missionaries Proceeding to the Uganda Mission*, June 2, 1899. CMSA G3 A7/L1-L2.

acquired reading skills outside of the limited possibilities of becoming a chief or working for the colonial government. Some saw becoming a catechist as the first step towards chieftancy, others hoped to become ordained, while for many spreading the Word was a temporary occupation before marriage. Although in the initial stages becoming a catechist did not offer a substantial material reward, the occupation did carry with it the important Ganda notion of *kitibwa*—glory and status.[90]

Ganda catechists received encouragement both from CMS missionaries as well as the Protestant chiefs. The enthusiasm the Protestant chiefs displayed towards the missionary endeavor resulted in part from the conflation of religion and politics during the early colonial period. While the CMS and the colonial state pursued different objectives, the relationship between the two European agencies in the formative period of colonial rule tended towards a close identification of Christianity and secular authority in the minds of the Baganda and their neighbors.[91] During the initial establishment of official colonial rule in the 1890s, the colonial government and the mission recognized "how much they were 'connected vessels'" and sought to establish some sort of cooperation and mutual understanding.[92] Bishop Tucker therefore agreed to comply with the colonial government's request that the CMS obtain permission before carrying out any planned extension of missionary work. As a result, a pattern emerged whereby the extension of the CMS "followed in the footsteps of the Protectorate's expansion, so that religious expansion paralleled political expansion."[93]

The early negotiations between the CMS and the colonial government had a significant impact on the spread of Protestant Christianity in Buganda. In the midst of their efforts to control the extent and direction of missionary activity, colonial officials accepted the missionaries' distinction between the CMS

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[89] Hanson, 173.
[90] Pirouet, 38.; Many teachers received small pieces of land as a result of the redistribution of land according to the Uganda Agreement of 1900. See *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, July 1900, 11.
[91] In general, the colonial state sought to maintain peace and order by imposing itself on existing polities. The mission, on the other hand, looked to infuse Christian principles into a changed societal order and to ultimately make itself superfluous by establishing a self-governing local church; see Hansen, Holger B. *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890-1925* (New York, 1984), 4-6.
[92] Hansen, 80.
[93] Ibid., 73.

and the Church Council as sponsoring bodies.[94] Thus, while missionaries required government permission before extending their activities into new districts, colonial officials did not feel compelled to restrict the movements of Baganda teachers not officially associated with the CMS. In fact, the government emphasized that Baganda teachers had the right to live outside Buganda and that "no one [could] stop them on the ground of their being Protestants."[95] Consequently, the CMS decided to withdraw economic support for the Ganda teachers working outside Mengo and leave it to the Church Council to pay for them.[96] In so doing the CMS sidestepped its agreement with the colonial government and, as a result, placed greater emphasis on local initiatives in spreading Protestant Christianity.

Significantly, a group of senior Protestant chiefs constituted a prominent contingent on the Mengo Church Council, the institution that became responsible for meeting chiefs' requests for catechists. Endowed with the authority to influence the flow of catechists into surrounding areas, Kagwa and his associates skillfully guided the spread of Protestant Christianity both to secure their status in the Ganda political system as well as to meet their expansionist ends.[97] The ruling Christian chiefs' control of land allocation further reinforced the connection between political authority and Christianity. In their attempts to solidify their power through the control of land, the leading Ganda chiefs distributed land to sub-chiefs of the appropriate religion, with the idea that the sub-chiefs' followers would adopt the religion of their leader.[98] Not surprisingly, Ganda catechists played a crucial role in this political strategy.

The Protestant chiefs' response to Bishop Tucker's written request for funding to support the new teachers displayed their commitment to sending out catechists. Most of the leading chiefs sent in gifts to the churches in their districts, with Kagwa making the largest contribution of 100,000 cowries.[99] Thus,

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[94] The distinction between the CMS and the Church Council proved to be an important one. The Church Council consisted of Baganda Christian leaders who in theory were to become the leaders of a self-governing local church. By acknowledging this distinction, the colonial government opened the door for the spread of Ganda catechists into the outlying regions as long as these catechists received their funding from the Church Council rather than the CMS.
[95] Roscoe to Baylis, July 1, 1894. CMSA G3 A5/010, qtd. in Hansen, 73.
[96] Ibid., 73.
[97] The greater number of Catholics than Protestants in Buganda served as one of the factors that motivated the actions of Kagwa and his associates; see Pirouet, 35.
[98] Hanson, 88-9.
[99] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, August 1900, 14.

while the CMS adopted a policy of using Ganda catechists as proselytizers, the Protestant Ganda chiefs determined the pace of evangelism. In fact, the expansion of missionary influence often followed the spread of Christianity through local channels, and "in most of the new districts the missionaries came to consolidate bands of neophytes already gathered by unordained, very often unbaptized, African enthusiasts … ."[100] The leading role that African catechists played in the spread of Christianity in Buganda and elsewhere suggested that the expansion of mission Christianity, rather than representing a major shift in the Africans' worldview, served as a way to fortify and reimagine chiefly power. The dark side of this process, of course, lay in the suppression of spirit mediumship and public healing, as the leading Christian chiefs and other royal representatives used colonial Christianity to win their struggle with public healers. Buganda's political tradition of reimagining political practices at particular historical moments afforded the kingdom's leaders with a way of accommodating and incorporating change, and the spread of Protestant Christianity therefore represented the continuation of this prominent feature in Ganda political thought.

Paul Landau described a similar process for the Ngwato kingdom in southern Africa. In his analysis of the spread of Christianity among the northern Tswana-speakers of central Botswana, Landau argued that the issue of conversion must be approached with a keen eye to the ways in which Africans incorporated an alien ideology and practices into familiar societal roles. By focusing on Tswana actions and motivations, Landau treated conversion and the spread of Christianity as a process by which various competing Tswana groups appropriated and transformed Christian terms and practices and then employed these seemingly Christian forms in the construction of power in the Ngwato kingdom.[101]

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[100] Oliver, Roland. *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London, 1952), 183.

[101] Landau, *Realm*, xxi. At the heart of Landau's work lies a critique of the fundamental notion of "religion" as a heuristic category in colonial Africa. Critical of the tendency among many scholars to enclose a society's irrational beliefs into a self-contained unit of analysis called "religion," Landau pointed out that such an approach overlooked an important epistemo logical difficulty: the fact that "religion" took shape in the late medieval period and that the concept took much of its current form as a result of the encounter between Westerners and people who had different religions. As he demonstrated in his work, expressions that anthropologists and historians often lumped into the category of "religion" in Africa did not always operate in ways that those doing the lumping would call religious. Colonial interactions and the scholarly studies that followed these interactions, Landau argued, essentially united a set of beliefs and ideas, presented these beliefs and ideas as "religion," and in

Landau's work forms part of a current debate about the nature of agency in African Christianity. Other scholars, including J.D.Y. Peel, have advocated similar approaches to Landau's, emphasizing how Africans seized Christianity and made it their own.[102] The noted historical anthropologists John and Jean Comaroff presented an alternative interpretation in their illuminating work on the colonial encounter between the southern Tswana and European missionaries. The Comaroffs argued that European missionaries, because they brought with them goods and knowledge in the form of guns, wealth objects, and technical skills, were "better positioned to impose their construction on the reality that [the Tswana and the missionaries] would come to share."[103] As a result, the imposition of European capitalist culture resulted in what they term the "colonization of consciousness," a process in which the Tswana's interactions with European evangelists lured them into the world of post-Enlightenment Western thought.

Questions about tradition and colonial rule lie at the heart of the debate surrounding African Christianity. For the Comaroffs, Tswana conversion to Christianity signaled a significant shift in Tswana discourse. In the process of debating the efficacy of the skills, ideas, and products that the missionaries brought with them, the Comaroffs suggested, the Tswana were lured into the structures of the civilizing mission. In other words, the early conversations between the Tswana and the missionaries served as a means of producing historical consciousness and initiated a process through which European culture and ideas would come to saturate the world of the Tswana. Landau, on the other hand, presented a quite different picture of these early interactions. Placing the power to commandeer everyday terms in the hands of the Tswana themselves, he illustrated how BaNgwato filtered and reworked missionary discourses to meet their own ends. Rather than viewing the initial Tswana embrace of Christianity as

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the process brought into being the notion of precolonial African religion. In order to rectify this shortcoming, Landau proposed that scholars revisit the genesis of the various concepts that missionaries thought seemed to correspond with Western notions of religion and retranslate, "outside of the ready-made framework of 'religion,'" concepts that have been passed down as God, Jesus, and Spirit. See Paul Landau, *"'Religion' and Conversion in African History: A New Model*," in *The Journal of Religious History*, 23:1 (February 1999), 124-142.

[102] Peel, J.D.Y. "For Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things?" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37:3 (1995), 581-607.

[103] Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff. "The Colonization of Consciousness" in John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford, 1992), 239.

representing Tswana induction into an alien culture, Landau demonstrated how Christianity was often the means by which Africans established new identities and reconfigured power in the face of colonial adversity. In short, for Landau colonial rule and missionary activities resulted in the reconfiguration rather than the gradual disappearance of Tswana discourse, a process in which the spread of Christianity lay as much in the hands of African evangelists as European missionaries.

The prominent role of Ganda catechists in the early colonial period suggests a similar process to the one Landau described. Following the directives of the Protestant chiefs, Ganda catechists traveled to places where Buganda had political interests. For the people living in the areas to which Ganda catechists traveled, the arrival of young Ganda men in their homelands conjured up images of Ganda expansionism and inspired a fear of Ganda domination.[104] Not surprisingly, these people often greeted the Ganda catechists with hostility. Under these circumstances, the equation of Ganda influence with Christianity resulted in the translation of anti-Ganda feeling into opposition to Christianity: Many chiefs in Busoga united in their refusal to permit the erection of churches;[105] the chiefs of Bukedi expelled Ganda teachers from their country in 1902 and initiated a reaction against the reading that these teachers had urged;[106] in Kavirondo the chiefs expressed ill will towards the Ganda catechists;[107] and two Ganda evangelists were killed in Bukedi in 1905.[108] Similar accounts of the experiences of Ganda catechists in areas outside of Buganda appeared throughout missionary memoirs and newspapers during this period.

The history of attempted Ganda domination accounted for much of the reason that Ganda catechists encountered such hostility. In the early nineteenth century *Kabaka* Suna II ordered sixteen military campaigns against neighboring kingdoms and his successor Mutesa I stood at the forefront of sixty-six such expeditions.[109] The arrogance of the Ganda catechists, who generally refused to learn other languages and frequently bestowed contempt upon their neighbors, added to the hostile environment in

[104] Pirouet, 36.
[105] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, November 1902, 62.
[106] Ibid., August 1902, 52.
[107] Ibid., February 1902, 12.
[108] Hansen, 400.

which these teachers found themselves.[110] Finally, the display of colonial power that accompanied the spread of Christianity in the early colonial period exacerbated the animosity that the Ganda teachers encountered. The experience of a *Gabula* chief in Busoga provided a telling example of the ways in which the people living outside of Buganda equated Christianity not only with Ganda imperialism but also with colonial domination. After learning that the Basoga chief had burnt the church and expelled the readers in his district, Captain Fowler, a colonial military officer, fined the chief sixty guns and sixty cattle. When the chief agreed to provide the cattle but not the guns, Fowler had him deposed and replaced him with his ten-year-old half brother under the care of Christian regents.[111]

But while Ganda catechists often met with unpleasant welcomes, they were also in many cases able to befriend local rulers. They distributed articles of clothing to the leading men and sold the books that in the eyes of potential converts appeared as the source of the catechists' newly acquired status.[112] Christianity also became embroiled in the local politics of other kingdoms just as it had in Buganda. In Busoga a young chief named Nadiope found his rule threatened by a strong party of elderly non-Christian men. In an effort to reinforce his position, Nadiope, a Christian convert, ordered that all idols be destroyed and that spirit worship cease. In addition, he forbade all of his subjects from smoking hemp and drinking beer.[113] In some instances the rulers of surrounding kingdoms adopted Christianity partly out of a fear of Ganda power, a process that served as the equivalent of paying tribute and protection money. Such a case occurred in Koki, where after being refused baptism the king sent a message to the CMS missionaries indicating that he was "anxious that if baptism is delayed he will decline in favor with Kagwa."[114] On other occasions the rulers of the surrounding kingdoms made attempts to embrace

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[109] Young, 13.
[110] Maddox to Baylis, December 4, 1899. CMSA G3 A7/01.
[111] *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, September 1900, 18.
[112] Ibid., June 1901 Supplement, 58.
[113] Ibid., December 1900, 31.
[114] Hall, 317.

Christianity in the hopes of challenging Ganda domination. They did so by requesting European rather than Ganda teachers, requests that the sparsely manned missions were seldom able to fulfill.[115]

That colonial officials and missionaries used Ganda chiefs and catechists to further their respective goals illustrated the extent to which the Europeans and the Baganda misunderstood each other's aims during the early colonial period. Partially unaware of the political implications of sending Ganda catechists outside of Buganda, the CMS missionaries expressed surprise at the fear of Ganda domination reported in the western kingdoms. Conversely, Ganda leaders did not fully comprehend the CMS's decision in 1911 to abandon its Ganda-biased policy. Colonial administrators made a similar adjustment with respect to government policy. In a sense the Ganda bias in both government and mission policy seemed destined for nullification. Ganda catechists found themselves in a self-defeating situation in that the ideology and way of life they spread—Anglican Christianity—also served as the characteristic that distinguished them from other people and granted them their privileged status in mission policy. The more effectively Ganda catechists performed their role of facilitating conversion outside of Buganda, the less essential they became both for the missionaries and the colonial officials. Ganda political agents found themselves in a similar situation, only propagating administrative order rather than, or in addition to, Christian culture. In fact, in the early colonial period missionaries and colonial officials did not make the distinction between administrative order and Christian orderliness, and colonial and missionary policies later suffered similar fates. From the 1910s to the mid-1920s the Ganda bias in government and CMS policy became less noticeable as both agencies responded to the hostility encountered by their Ganda representatives in areas outside of Buganda.

While Mengo's administrative and religious order had had a significant impact on the development of colonial policies in Uganda, the colonial government's decision to reformulate its policy ultimately resulted from the failure rather than the success of what administrative officials viewed as their

[115] For example see the case of Kagoda, a Basoga chief who, reflecting the Basoga dislike of the arrogant Ganda catechists, requested that the missionaries send non-Ganda teachers to his area. *Mengo/Uganda Notes*, January 1901, 34-5.

Ganda agents. The hostility that the people living outside of Buganda directed towards these agents of colonial rule and Ganda imperialism illustrated an important characteristic of indirect rule. Rather than representing the ability of colonial administrators to impose their systems of rule through African intermediaries, indirect rule reflected a policy in which colonial governments attempted to channel for their own purposes the power generated *within* African societies. Consequently, power did not flow from the colonial government down, but rather moved in the opposite direction from African societies upwards.[116] Endowed with neither the ability nor sufficient knowledge to force an alien form of rule onto local communities, colonial governments sought to maintain rather than create order. This proved a more difficult task than the colonial governments envisioned, however, as the shifting dynamics of power and order in African societies lured colonial regimes into local political affairs. Such a case occurred in colonial Uganda, where the government's Ganda political agents, although initially successful, failed to meet the demands of indirect rule.

Considering the history of turbulent relations between Buganda and its neighboring kingdoms, the role that colonial officials envisioned for their Ganda representatives seemed destined to fail. Rather than being endowed with the ability to harness local power, these Ganda intermediaries represented a threat to the rulers living in the areas to which they traveled. The reactions of the people living outside Buganda to what they perceived as attempts at Ganda domination ultimately forced colonial officials and missionaries alike to rethink their policies. In the end, the political and religious interplay between Buganda's leaders and colonial administrators proved unable to sustain the kingdom's expansionist aspirations.

But whereas the leading Ganda chiefs failed in their endeavors outside of Buganda, they succeeded, at least during the early colonial period, within the confines of their own kingdom. Looking to maintain order without the use of force, the British eagerly threw their support behind what they viewed as the traditional forces in Ganda society. The Ganda chiefs not only succeeded in presenting themselves as the kingdom's legitimate leaders according to established tradition, but also offered the colonial

[116] For a concise description of the politics of indirect rule, see Fields, 31-60.

administration a way to simultaneously affect change and maintain the 'traditional' order. As in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Buganda, the right to rule rested on a leader's ability to claim the legacy of the kingdom's past and at the same time present a picture of future prosperity. This ability, of course, depended on a leader's capacity to control the material dimensions of political life, a capacity that the Uganda Agreement of 1900 afforded to Buganda's ruling Christian chiefs.

7 • Conclusion

While the religious and cultural changes in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Buganda bear the markings of colonial and missionary influence, an analysis that takes as its starting point the imposition of colonial rule cannot capture the significance of this cultural transformation. An examination of the changes in Buganda as well as other African societies during the colonial period requires a much broader scope, a vision that extends beyond the limited structure that posits an opposition between colonial invention and longstanding tradition. The social and political histories of precolonial Africa reflect a process of ongoing change in which tradition serves as a vehicle of transformation rather than an identifiable baseline from which to gauge the effects of colonialism. In the face of fluid political and social processes, tradition continually changes in order to stay alive.

But precolonial tradition did not act like a chameleon-like creature, naturally adjusting to changing environments and new social structures. People actively changed tradition, and in the early period of colonial rule in Buganda Apolo Kagwa and his fellow Christian chiefs emerged as the individuals best situated to determine the nature of these changes. After their victory in the violent struggles of the early 1890s, Kagwa and his followers faced the familiar task of legitimating their authority, of reimagining the kingdom's political traditions. "The Christianization of political institutions" represented the outcome of this imaginative process and reflected the efforts of these chiefs to secure their privileged positions within the kingdom, an endeavor not unlike the previous efforts of Ganda leaders.

The emergence of Christianity as the lens through which Ganda chiefs reimagined tradition illustrated the effects of colonial rule on the political process in Buganda. In the particular circumstances

of the early colonial period, Christianity cemented not only the Ganda present to the past but also the relationship between the Protestant Ganda chiefs and European religious and administrative authorities. Royal ceremony, Christmas feasts, and Sunday church services simultaneously reflected Ganda imaginings of tradition and European visions of modernity. But for the Baganda these conceptions neither conflicted nor occupied distinct realms of existence. As in the past, long-term continuity proved compatible with active change, and the process of reimagining political traditions persisted during the early colonial period.

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