

## BIBLICAL TRANSLATIONS OF EARLY MISSIONARIES IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA: TRANSLATIONS INTO LUGANDA

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For East African Church history, Zanzibar and coastal settlements established since the early 1860s by both Anglican and Catholic mission societies, became crucial points from where groups of missionaries could proceed from the Islamised Swahili coast into the interior of the continent. Early missionaries, Johann Krapf and Bishop Edward Steere, pioneered linguistic and translation work with regard to Swahili. Krapf's translation of the Gospels into Swahili was of great importance for Bishop Steere's New Testament translation and both translations set a high standard not only for other Swahili translations but became a basis and a great reference work for Bible translations into other important East African languages produced during the period prior to the World War One, especially George Pilkington's translation into Luganda.

**Key words:** Uganda, the kingdom of Buganda, early Christian missionaries, Bible translations into Luganda

In the nineteenth-century East and Central Africa, Africans had a real choice between two world religions, Christianity and Islam. Islam, present on the East African coast for nearly a thousand years, in the nineteenth century through its commercial expansion made headway into the interior. Its diffusion was carried out by Arab and Swahili traders who brought an accommodating version of Islam. An up-country area deeply influenced by Islam was the Lacustrine area, namely the kingdom of Buganda, where Islam secured a strong foothold and became a formidable rival to Christianity.<sup>1</sup> The process of Islamisation of Buganda gained

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<sup>1</sup> Vilhanová-Pawliková, Viera: *Crescent or Cross? Islam and Christian Missions in Nineteenth-Century East and Central Africa*. In: Ulrich Van der Heyden – Jürgen Becher (Hrsg): *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*. Missionsgeschichtliches Archiv Bd.6. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag 2000. Pp. 79-95.

momentum during the reign of kabaka Mutesa (1856-1884) who encouraged trade with Zanzibari merchants present in Buganda. Especially after 1866 Islam started to spread in the country and gain converts among the court élite.<sup>2</sup> Mutesa himself was attracted by Islam, adopted it<sup>3</sup> and started to observe faithfully Islamic practices. A by-product of the presence of Swahili-speaking coastal merchants in Buganda was the diffusion of Swahili and literacy. Literacy enhanced the popularity of Islam and the concept of reading *okusoma* became a synonym for the adoption of a new religion Islam and later on Christianity. Literacy was inextricably connected with both religions of the Book, Islam and Christianity, because it enabled converts to read their Holy Books, the Qu'ran and the Bible. In the kingdom of Buganda converts were called "readers".

Kabaka Mutesa learnt to read and write Arabic and Swahili, adopted Arab dress and manners, by the late 1860s he was reading the Qu'ran in Arabic, and since 1867 for over ten years continued to observe Ramadan. He also established and maintained diplomatic relations with the Sultan of Zanzibar. He was especially fond of Arabic poetry and could converse fluently in Arabic with European visitors who came to his court, namely Charles Chaillé-Long in 1874, Emin Pasha in 1876 and later on with the Church Missionary Society missionaries Felkin and O'Flaherty. Mutesa's interest in the teachings of Islam and literacy was shared by some of the pages and dignitaries at the royal court. During the 1870s the knowledge of the Arabic script and of the Arabic and Swahili languages spread among the court élite, chiefs and pages. The court became islamised, mosques were built by chiefs and a number of future Christian converts who were young pages *bagalagala* at this time, adopted Islam.<sup>4</sup> Between 1867 and 1875, the impact of islamisation began to be felt not only at the court, but in the countryside as well. Islam was gaining ground and was proclaimed the state religion.

In 1875, when the famous traveller Henry Morton Stanley arrived in the kingdom of Buganda, the process of Islamisation of the country reached a climax. Stanley was on an trans-continental expedition across East and Central Africa to follow up the explorations of David Livingstone, J. H. Speke, and Samuel Baker

<sup>2</sup> See Zimbe, B. M.: Buganda ne Kabaka (Buganda and Kabaka). Mengo 1938; also Mukasa, Hamu: Some Notes on the Reign of Mutesa. In: Uganda Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1934, pp. 60-70 (both in Luganda and English); and Mukasa, Hamu: Simudda Nyuma (Go Forward). 2 vols. London 1938, 1942, the manuscript of the third volume was discovered in 1964; Kaggwa, Sir Apolo: Ekitabo Kya Basekabaka be Buganda (The Kings of Buganda). Kampala 1901; Miti, Jemusi K.: Ebyafayo bya Buganda (A Short History of Buganda). Unpublished typescript, both in Luganda and English; Gray, Sir John: Mutesa of Buganda. In: Uganda Journal, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1934, pp. 22-49.

<sup>3</sup> Actually he was never circumcised and thus formally converted, in Buganda it was forbidden to shed royal blood.

<sup>4</sup> Apart from the already quoted sources, see Oded, Arye: Islam in Uganda. Islamization through a Centralized State in Pre-Colonial Africa. Jerusalem 1974, Part One, pp. 1-142; Kasoyi, Abdu. B.: The Spread of Islam in Uganda. The Penetration of Islam into Buganda 1844 to 1875. Nairobi - Khartoum 1986, pp. 13-32; Kasoyi, A. B.: The Spread of Islam in Uganda. Polyc. 1970, 45 maps; White Fathers' Archives (WFA), P 200/14; and King, Noel - Kasoyi, Abdu - Oded, Arye: Islam and the Confluence of Religions in Uganda 1840 - 1966. Talahassee (Florida) 1973.

and resolve some geographical questions. During his journey of exploration, sponsored by two newspapers, the *New York Herald* and London's *Daily Telegraph*, he visited the kabaka Mutesa of Buganda. Impressed by what he saw in Buganda, the potential of the country and its people, Stanley, journalist, traveller and explorer, turned into a lay missionary who used his stay at the court to undermine the position of Islam in the kingdom of Buganda and to "explain the Bible and the Christian religion to the king."<sup>5</sup> Kabaka Mutesa was at that time anxious to widen his country's diplomatic, political and commercial contacts and impressed by the technological superiority of the white men,<sup>6</sup> he was ready to welcome them in his country in the hope that they would get him the much desired military and technical assets associated with the European culture and also help him to understand the wider world that was increasingly impinging upon his country and threatening its independence.

Stanley came to be forerunner of the missionaries by being the first to teach Mutesa about Christianity and by producing a little book of biblical selections in Swahili. In this task Stanley collaborated closely with his African servant and interpreter he had engaged for the journey to the Great Lakes, a slave from Nyasaland, Dallington Maftaa Scopion, who was freed in Zanzibar and then educated and baptised by the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. Together with this UMCA pupil well versed in Swahili, they translated some parts of the Bible into this East African lingua franca, "embracing all the principal events from the Creation to the Crucifixion of Christ. St. Luke's Gospel was translated entire, as giving a more complete history of the Saviour's life".<sup>7</sup> Maftaa together with Masudi the Arab then wrote everything down in Arabic script what Dallington Maftaa had read and translated from the Bible so that the Kabaka and some dignitaries at the royal court could read it. Stanley and Maftaa produced quite a large number of copies of these fragments of the Bible texts in Swahili. Stanley also had ten commandments in Arabic to be written on a board for Mutesa's daily perusal.<sup>8</sup>

During the conversations Stanley held with the kabaka expounding to him some rudiments of Christianity he became convinced of kabaka Mutesa's interest in Christian religion and his readiness to invite Christian missionaries into his country. Believing that Buganda could become a base of missionary enterprise in

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<sup>5</sup> When describing his visit to the kingdom of Buganda in April 1875 Stanley boasted to have succeeded in his task. Stanley, H. M.: *Through the Dark Continent*. London, George Newness 1899, vol. 1, p. 164; Stanley, H. M.: *Through the Dark Continent*. London 1878, vol. II, pp. 193-195.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley made a favourable impression on kabaka Mutesa by actively assisting him in a military campaign against the Bavuma islanders.

<sup>7</sup> Simpson, Donald: *Dark Companions: the African contribution to the European exploration of East Africa*. London, 1975, p. 121. Quoted in Sundkler, Bengt- Steed, Christopher: *A History of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2000, reprint 2001, p. 568.

<sup>8</sup> Kagawa, Sir Apolo: *The Kings of Buganda*. Translated and edited by M. S. M. Kiwanuka. Historical Texts of Eastern and Central Africa I. Nairobi-Dar es Salaam – Kampala, East African Publishing House 1971, pp. 168-171, See also Stanley, *ibid*.

the Lacustrine region, Stanley then wrote his famous letter to the *Daily Telegraph* of 15 November 1875 inviting Christian missionaries into the country. Stanley was actually not the first European visitor who eulogized the kingdom of Buganda as a most hopeful field for missionary endeavour. Thirteen years ago, in 1862, Captains J. H. Speke and J. A. Grant had come into the Lacustrine region to solve the mystery of the sources of the Nile and became the first two Europeans to visit Buganda. It was Speke who first conceived the idea of making the kingdom of Buganda an outpost for missionary expansion in the interior of Eastern and Central Africa but back at home Speke's scheme did not rouse any interest, while in response to Stanley's passionate appeal for Christian teachers to come to the court of kabaka Mutesa, the Church Missionary Society decided to open a mission station in the kingdom of Buganda. As a consequence, the first two missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, Lieut. Shergold Smith and Rev. C. T. Wilson arrived after a difficult and perilous journey on 30 June 1877 at the capital of Buganda which was then situated at Rubaga.<sup>9</sup>

Mutesa allowed missionaries to settle near his court and to visit the palace regularly and using Dallington Maftaa as an interpreter to teach himself and some of his chiefs and pages. The case of Maftaa well illustrates the role of an African interpreter in Bible translation and proselytisation. When Stanley left Buganda to continue his geographical explorations further west, he left his interpreter and assistant catechist Maftaa at Mutesa's court to conduct prayers, instruct in Christianity and translate the Bible to Mutesa.<sup>10</sup> After the arrival of the first CMS missionaries, Maftaa translated for them when they preached the Gospel and held services and Mutesa who took interest in their teachings, translated the sermons from Swahili into Luganda.<sup>11</sup> Dallington Maftaa's knowledge of both Swahili and Luganda was utilised later also by the White Fathers, for whom he translated parts of the Gospels into Luganda and at the same time he taught them Luganda and even wrote for them Kiganda traditions.<sup>12</sup>

However, due to a number of misfortunes and difficulties of this early period of missionary presence,<sup>13</sup> the work of evangelisation did not actually begin until the arrival of Alexander Mackay in November 1878 and, three months later, in February 1879, of the second party of the CMS missionaries, Dr. R. W. Felkin, the Reverend G. Litchfield and Mr. Pearson who had come by the Nile route, to be

<sup>9</sup> Stock, E.: *A History of the Church Missionary Society*. 4 vols. London 1899 – 1916, vol. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See a letter written by Maftaa to Bishop Steere at Zanzibar of 23 April 1876. Quoted in: Sundkler – Steed, op. cit., p. 568. See also Gray, J. M. Sir: *The correspondence of Dallington Maftaa*. In: *Uganda Journal*, 30, 1955, pp. 13-24. Also Kaggwa, Sir Apolo: *The Kings of Buganda*, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

<sup>11</sup> Tuma, Tom: *Church Expansion in Buganda*. In: Tuma, Tom. A.D. & Mutibwa, Phares (Eds.): *A Century of Christianity in Uganda, 1877-1977*. Nairobi, Uzima Press 1978, Chapter 2, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> *The Rubaga Diary*, 12th December, 1879; February 9th, 1880. Also Kaggwa, Sir Apolo: *The Kings of Buganda*, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

<sup>13</sup> Missionaries O'Neill and Shergold Smith were murdered at the south of the lake Victoria and Wilson was left alone in Buganda for about a year.

followed in only one week by Father Simeon Lourdel and brother Amans Delmas of the Roman Catholic White Fathers' Society.<sup>14</sup>

Teaching efforts of both Christian missions aroused interest at Buganda's court and the number of inquirers anxious to learn the alphabet continued to swell. Christian conversion and education or training went hand in hand. Early conversions were not inspired solely by the Christian message, they came also through a desire to read, protection, medical care and sometimes presents. Initially the first group to receive a religious instruction in the kingdom of Buganda were former slaves, mostly children who had been presented to missionaries or who had been bought free by both the CMS missionaries and the White Fathers simply to get followers and converts. They then used them as personal or house servants and retainers. Christianity in Buganda was initially a slaves' religion because the first Christian converts were slaves "redeemed" by missionaries and were regarded by local people as falling into the category of *abagule* or "those bought". Some of the first Christian adherents, converts and catechumens, executed by Kabaka Mwanga in 1885-7, the Uganda martyrs, were slaves.<sup>15</sup> This tiny nucleus of adherents of both missions was soon enlarged by free Baganda who became interested in their teachings connecting the religious instruction with the education of basic literacy. The majority of inquirers soon came from among the elites at the royal court, the kabaka's young palace pages – *bagalagala* –, who were in training there for high positions of *bakungu* administrative chiefs, and other dignitaries and artisans present at the Kabaka's court. The number of "readers" continued to swell. The instruction in reading and writing which went with the work of evangelisation was in Swahili. An important factor that helped the missions in this task was the local knowledge of the Swahili and Arabic languages and of the Arabic script. "Islam may be said to have prepared the way here," admitted Mackay, one of the first Anglican missionaries to Buganda and a bitter enemy of Islam,<sup>16</sup> who after his arrival in Buganda was astonished to find so many copies of the booklet of Biblical texts written in Swahili in the Arabic script prepared by Stanley and his scribe Dallington Maftaa still around.<sup>17</sup>

Swahili which was at that time widely used in the East African interior as a trade language and a means of inter-ethnic communication also became a lingua

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Mackay (1850-1890) was a member of the first Uganda-bound party but he remained at the coast for a time and arrived in Buganda in November 1878 to join Wilson, the only surviving member of the first CMS party, and remained there until July 1887 when he was expelled from Buganda. For two periods he was the only Anglican missionary in the country. Father Siméon Lourdel (1853-1890) and brother Amans Delmas (1852-1895) of the Roman Catholic White Fathers' Society landed at Entebbe on 17 February 1879, being the very first arrivals. For the history of the White Fathers society see Mercui, J. M.: *Les origines de la Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique (Pères Blancs)*. Algiers, Maison Carrée 1929.

<sup>15</sup> Twaddle, Michael: *The Ending of Slavery in Buganda*. In: Miers, Suzanne and Roberts, Richard (Eds): *The End of Slavery in Africa*. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press 1988, pp. 119-149, esp. p. 124.

<sup>16</sup> For Mackay's remark, see Mackay to CMS, 26 December 1878. *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, October 1879, p. 609.

<sup>17</sup> Sundkler – Steed, op. cit., p. 570.



franca of East African Christianity, used by early Christian missionaries of all denominations on the East African coast as well as in the interior and its knowledge in Buganda no doubt helped Christian missionaries in the work of evangelisation.

After their coming into the kingdom of Buganda, missionaries of both denominations used Swahili as a medium of instruction and had at their disposal some biblical texts in Swahili. In his public debates or quarrels with Alexander Mackay over doctrinal differences between Roman Catholic theology and Anglican Christianity, which were followed avidly by kabaka Mutesa and his chiefs, Father Lourdel and other early Catholic missionaries had at first used biblical texts translated into Swahili by the Holy Ghost Fathers, while Mackay had at his disposal some Swahili translations prepared by early Protestant missionaries at the East African coast, Johann Krapf and Bishop Edward Steere. But the position of Swahili in Buganda was from the very outset in the eyes of both missions jeopardized by its association with Islam, a rival religion they wanted to eradicate, and soon both missions strove to introduce Luganda arguing that the Christian message could be properly understood only if it were taught in the mother tongue. White Fathers who in their other East African missions used Swahili, in Buganda very soon turned from Swahili and increasingly favoured the use of Luganda, which became the first local language reduced to writing.<sup>18</sup>

Since his arrival in Buganda in November 1778, Alexander Mackay devoted himself to practical teaching, biblical translations and book production. To Mackay literacy was a key to Christian conversion and ability to read a Gospel a requirement for baptism and a way to a personal revelation of Biblical Truth. He started to translate portions of the Scriptures into Luganda and Swahili, beginning with a translation of St. Mathew's Gospel and then used his engineering skills to set up his own printing press to print the reading sheets and Bible texts. He, however, personally preferred the Fourth Gospel and wished to proceed as soon as possible to its translation. In the following years Mackay continued to work on the translations of parts of the New Testament into Luganda. He finished St Mathew's Gospel at Usambiro where he settled after he had been expelled by kabaka Mutesa's successor, his son Mwanga, in July 1887, and the translation was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in London the same year. Both Swahili and Luganda used to be written in Arabic script and Mackay was one of those missionaries who were responsible for reducing Luganda to writing in Roman script. The first publication in Luganda Mackay prepared and printed on his printing press was a booklet called *Mateeka* or *Commandments* which comprised an alphabet, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and a selection of texts Mackay himself called "Certain words from the Book of God".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Vilhanová-Pawliková, Viera: *Swahili and the Dilemma of Ugandan Language Policy*. In: *Asian and African Studies*, 5, 2, 1996, pp. 158-170.

<sup>19</sup> Stock, E.: *A History of the Church Missionary Society*, op. cit. vol. 3, 109; Sundkler – Steed, op. cit, pp. 569-570; Tuma, Tom. A. D. & Mutibwa, Phares (Eds.): *A Century of Christianity in Uganda, 1877-1977*, op. cit. pp. 93-94; H(arrison), J. W.: *A. A. Mackay: pioneer missionary of*

The mastering of the new languages, Swahili and Luganda, and Scripture translation were viewed by most early missionaries as their central responsibility. Portions of the Gospels were translated by many early C.M.S. missionaries. O'Flaherty, one of the first CMS missionaries in the kingdom of Buganda, also started to translate the Gospels into Luganda but his efforts were not appreciated by other missionaries because the Baganda had not participated sufficiently in the translation work. The role of the Baganda in Scripture translation should be emphasised, without their co-operation the task of translation of the religious texts into Luganda could never have been accomplished. Other early CMS missionaries, R. Ashe, Crabtree, Gordon and Walker, and some others made efforts at Gospel translation into Luganda and cooperated with the Baganda, Henry Wright Duta Kitaakule and Sembera Mackay.<sup>20</sup>

The role of Bishop Steere's Swahili translation of the Bible was fundamental.<sup>21</sup> The Baganda experts on Swahili, Mika Sematimba and Nuwa Kikwabanga, helped in the translation from the Swahili Bible into Luganda. But the task of translation of the whole Bible into Luganda fell to George L. Pilkington, who arrived in Buganda on 27 December 1890 and shortly after the arrival started the work of translation using the Swahili version of the Bible and sharing the responsibility with senior Baganda Protestant converts and Church leaders, Henry Wright Duta Kitaakule as his chief assistant, Sembera Mackay, Samwili Mukasa and Nuwa Nakiwafu. He had already a working knowledge of Luganda because he spent much time on the journey up-country from the coast trying to learn it from Nuwa Kikwabanga. Together with his team of Baganda collaborators Pilkington started working on the translations and by the end of March 1891, hardly three months since his arrival in the country, had completed the Acts of the Apostles, and started preparing for publication translations previously made by other missionaries. Out of his work had come a revised and enlarged Prayer Book, many hymns, a Luganda primer and a vocabulary. By the time he went on leave to England in 1896 Pilkington had translated and prepared for the press a considerable part of the Old Testament, while another CMS linguist W. A. Crabtree, was responsible for the translation of the minor prophets. During his stay in England Pilkington completed the task of translation of most of the Bible into Luganda. The first Luganda Bible, known as "Biscuit Bible", was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1896.<sup>22</sup>

The teaching of literacy was also a particular concern of the White Fathers mission.<sup>23</sup> Thanks to the policy of their founding father, Cardinal Lavignerie, who

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the CMS in Uganda. London 1890, 134-140; Pirouet, M. Louise: Mackay, Alexander Morehead. In: Historical Dictionary of Uganda. African Historical Dictionaries, No. 64. Metuchen, N. J. & London, The Scarecrow Press 1995, pp. 232-233.

<sup>20</sup> Sundkler – Steed, op. cit., p. 580.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, John: The Growth of the Church in Buganda. London, S. C. M. 1958, pp. 237-240.

<sup>22</sup> Tuma, T. – Mutibwa, Ph. (Eds): A Century of Christianity in Uganda, op. cit., pp. 94-95; Harford-Battersby, Charles, F.: Pilkington of Uganda. London 1898 (2nd edition), pp. 190-237.

<sup>23</sup> Religious education also included instruction in reading. But other elements of elementary education like writing and calculations were taught only in the so called mugigi or school of writers, not in all catechumenates. By 1893 it was the rule that everybody must be able to read

insisted that the Catholic missionaries should devote their spare time to the study of local African languages, to master them and by approaching the Africans in their own languages minimise cultural misunderstandings and distinctions between themselves and their potential converts,<sup>24</sup> many White Fathers became excellent linguists and great Luganda scholars. Their linguistic work laid a solid foundation for all Catholic missionaries who came after. Fathers Livinhac, Le Veux and Gorju were outstanding linguists who, as they were instructed, spent precious hours preparing grammars and dictionaries and producing catechisms. However, although the Anglican Luganda Bible was first completed in 1896, the Catholic missionaries were not urged to translate the Scriptures in Luganda, only the Gospels.<sup>25</sup> The first catechism in Luganda which is, at the same time, the very first publication in an African language kept in the Department of publications in African languages of the White Fathers Archives in Rome, was printed in 1881. It was prepared by Father Livinhac and numbered 44 pages. The essential Christian truths were condensed into 19 pages, followed by 7 pages of prayers, then a syllabary and some pages of reading which were intended to enable the Baganda to learn to read and write. Father Livinhac was the author of many other books in Luganda, of a Luganda grammar, a vocabulary, etc.<sup>26</sup> Father Le Veux who arrived from Europe in 1903 was the author of an over one thousand pages long Luganda-French dictionary which has since its publication remained the basic work on Luganda vocabulary.<sup>27</sup>

The efforts of both missions met with an enthusiastic response. Reading became so popular in Buganda that the booklet prepared by Mackay and the Catholic catechism prepared by Father Livinhac were circulated in tens of thousands. Though a printing press was set up at Mengo by the C.M.S. missionaries right upon their arrival to meet the rising demands, the White Fathers had their books published at their headquarters in Algiers where they strove to keep pace with the literary needs of the White Fathers mission in Uganda and elsewhere. Early missionaries in Uganda left vivid accounts of Baganda "readers" drifting from one mission station, one set of instruction to another, often frequenting both mission stations as well as the Zanzibari camp at Lunguja, and of Baganda lads sitting on the hay-covered floor in the royal palace reading or scribbling on boards or any scrap of paper they could pick up and, lacking paper, sometimes even practising with a stick or just their own fingers in the dust of the royal

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before baptism, except the old people and the women. Marcou, J.: *L'Instruction dans les écoles catholiques en Uganda*, msc 1902, 4 p. W. F. A. P 166/2.

<sup>24</sup> Lavigerie, Cardinal: *Instructions aux missionnaires*. Namur 1950, pp. 70, 116, 131.

<sup>25</sup> Diemer, E.: *Essai de Bibliographie des travaux bibliques des Pères Blancs en Afrique*. In: *Nouvelle Revue de science missionnaire* XVII, 1961, pp. 127-134. Also Monchamps, Georges Mgr.: *L'Œuvre Linguistique des Pères Blancs d'Afrique*. Bruxelles, Hayes, Imprimeur de l'Académie Royale de Belgique 1904.

<sup>26</sup> Bishop Streicher (1863-1952) had managed to learn Luganda before his arrival in Buganda in February 1891 with the aid of Livinhac's grammar.

<sup>27</sup> *Premier essai de vocabulaire luganda-français*. Algier, Maison Carrée 1917. Father Le Veux was also the author of *Lexicon Latinum Ugandicum*. Bukalasa 1912. 632 pp.



courtyard.<sup>28</sup> The Baganda were introduced to written literature first through Islam and some years later through Christian propaganda. Christian missionaries provided an alternative literacy and belief system. The Qu'ran was communicated to them in sometimes incomprehensible Arabic while the very first books in their own language Luganda were produced to advance the Christian cause. By producing materials which were the first documents of the written form of the language, emisafu or alphabet sheets, word lists and grammars, later full-scale dictionaries, textbooks and manuals, translations of portions of the Gospels, then of the whole New Testament, and still later on of the whole of the Protestant Bible – *Ekitabo Ekitukuwu* in Luganda, missionaries of both denominations created the pre-conditions for the building up of the literary tradition and the written literary language.

As soon as the Baganda learned to read and write, they were keen to practise it.<sup>29</sup> Many semi-legible notes containing news of anything said or done at the court have been preserved in both the C. M. S. archives in Birmingham and the White Fathers archives in Rome, as well as in the Lugard Papers at Rhodes House, Oxford, and in other private papers. It cannot be doubted that this habit of writing anonymous letters and of conveying political secrets by writing was one of the contributing causes of Mwanga's persecution of Christians in 1886. As substantial collections of Baganda correspondence prove, later on during the civil wars of 1888 to 1892 the Baganda were becoming more and more skilled in accurately conveying their thoughts on paper and supplementing verbal reports with written communications. Imitating the Europeans and adopting their ways and habits, the Baganda became genuine products of the Victorian age with its passion for recording, corresponding and writing diaries.<sup>30</sup>

The first book originally written in Luganda ever to be published was Sir Apolo Kagga's *Basekabaka be Buganda* or Kings of Buganda, first printed in 1901. Converted by the C.M.S. mission in 1886 Apolo Kagga was arrested by Kabaka Mwanga with other Christian converts, but he luckily escaped execution and was beaten instead. In 1887 Apolo Kagga was promoted to be the chief of the royal stores and placed at the head of the regiment Ekitongole Ekyegwanika, filled predominantly by converts of the C.M.S. Kagga was also made responsible for the distribution of the booty, and became wealthy. He became politically prominent during the civil succession wars of 1888-1889 when the Christians, defeated

<sup>28</sup> Mullins, J. D.: *The Wonderful Story of Uganda*. London, C. M. S. 1904 includes early memoirs of a leading Protestant convert Hamu Mukasa. See also Mackay to Lang, 29 September, 1885, C. M. S. Archives, G3A6/02, and H. W. J.: A. M. Mackay, op. cit., pp. 138-140; Tourigny, Yves: *So abundant a harvest: the Catholic Church in Uganda 1879-1979*. London 1979, pp. 32-49.

<sup>29</sup> Already in 1891 Lugard reported that coloured cloth, beads and wire were useless as trade goods in Buganda. "They want paper, notebooks and writing materials." See Lugard to Admin. Gen. IBEA Co., 13. Aug. 1891, in *Africa*, No. 4, 1892, p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Rowe, J. A.: *The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court*. In: *Journal of African History*, V, 1964, No. 1, pp. 55-72; Rowe, J. A.: *Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition: Luganda Historical Writing, 1893-1969*. In: *Uganda Journal*, 33, 1969, No. 1, pp. 17-40.

by the Muslims, took refuge in Ankole. The turning point in his political career came in 1889 after the Christian victory: he became *katikkiro* or chief minister and continued to hold this office until 1926 when he was forced to resign. A staunch collaborator and supporter of the new régime and a personal friend of British officials and missionaries, he was for his loyalty and faithful services honoured by the colonial government with a K.C.M.G.<sup>31</sup>

The famous book of history is probably the best known book in Luganda and has been used by many scholars working on Buganda history.<sup>32</sup> Apolo Kaggwa was a prolific author, though there were others of a similar cast. The interest that Sir Apolo Kaggwa took in writing, and the importance he attached to preserving the written word were not exceptional and were shared by most of his contemporaries. Most Baganda of Sir Apolo Kaggwa's generation had acquired literacy after enduring many hardships sometimes incurring physical risk in so doing.<sup>33</sup> The civil succession wars of 1888-1892 saw the triumph of the Christian converts. The Protestant-Catholic coalition had gained sole control over the political hierarchy and those who were not in communion with them or with the recognised Muslim minority, had no other alternative but to join one of the religious parties.<sup>34</sup> Victorious Christians swept all the unsuccessful from their posts. Christianity and literacy, for these two things were inseparably connected, came to be viewed as the key to social and political advancement.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See Kiwanuka, M. S. M.: *Sir Apolo Kaggwa and the Pre-Colonial History of Buganda*. In: Uganda Journal, 30, 1966, No. 2, pp. 137-152.

<sup>32</sup> The original edition of *Basekabaka be Buganda*, printed in England in 1901 and numbering some 500 copies, was put on sale in Uganda in 1902 at 5 rupees per copy. The price was soon reduced to three rupees. Already by 1912 a second edition containing some new material appeared, including an account of the return of Kabaka Mwanga's body from the Seychelles, where he had died in 1903 in exile. This was followed in 1927 with a third edition also containing new additional sections on some neighbouring countries, such as Bunyoro, Ankole and Toro. This last edition was reprinted in 1953 by the Uganda Bookshop and sold out within a few years. Rowe, J. A.: *Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition*, op. cit., pp. 17-21.

<sup>33</sup> Rowe, J. A.: *The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court*, op. cit., also Rowe, J. A.: Baganda Chiefs who Survived Kabaka Mwanga's Purge of 1886. A paper obtainable from Makerere Institute of Social Research. Kampala, date unknown.

<sup>34</sup> Low, D. A.: *Religion and Society in Buganda, 1875-1900*, East African Studies No. 8, Nairobi 1957, especially pp. 16-18 and *Uganda and the British, 1862-1900*, an unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Oxford, Exeter College 1957.

<sup>35</sup> *Apolo Kaggwa, Katikkiro and Regent of Uganda* by Rev. J. Roscoe. In: Church Missionary Gleaner, July 1, 1902, p. 108. Kaggwa himself described how at first he alone adopted new customs and work habits, beginning on 31st January 1890, with his purchase of a watch. Others laughed at him at first but later followed him. He went on to reform the slopshod procedure of the *lukiiko*, purchased a horse (September 1902); built a two-storey brick house (July 1894); bought a kerosene lamp (January 1896); and a bicycle (1898) and began writing his first book. In 1894, he also adopted the custom of eating while seated at a table instead of upon mats spread on the floor, and of drinking tea instead of banana beer. Quoted from *Social Mobility, Traditional and Modern* by L. A. Fallers in: *The King's Men, Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*. Ed. by L. A. Fallers, London, Oxford University Press on behalf of the East African Institute of Social Research 1964, p. 183.

The turn of the century was the beginning of a busy period in Luganda literature. Kaggwa seems to have started at an early date to record the turbulent events of the 1880s and 1890s. According to R. Ashe of the C. M. S. mission, already by 1894 Kaggwa had written a tiny booklet on *The Wars of Buganda* (*Entalo Za Buganda*), which is, however, no longer extant. Starting with *Basekabaka be Buganda* in 1901, Kaggwa's other historical writings followed: *Ekitabo kye Empisa Za Baganda* (*The Book of the Traditions and Customs of the Baganda*), first published in 1905; *Ekitabo Ky'Ebika bya Abaganda* (*The Book of the Clans of the Baganda*), published in 1908; and the book of the Grasshopper clan, *Ekitabo Kya Kika Kye Nsenene*, published in 1904. The latter was the first production on a small printing press which was presented to the *katikkiro* by the Foreign Office when Kaggwa and Mukasa visited England for Edward VII's coronation in 1902. Besides these major historical writings, in 1902 Kaggwa produced his first edition of *Baganda Fables* (*Engero za Baganda*), reprinted by Sheldon Press in 1920.<sup>36</sup>

Kaggwa's major historical works were written between 1900-1912, some thirty years after the Luganda language had been committed to writing. After 1912 Kaggwa stopped writing, except for a few occasional articles he contributed to the *Ebifa*, a C.M.S. newspaper. The three most outstanding historical works, *Basekabaka be Buganda*, *Ekitabo Kye Empisa za Baganda* and *Ekitabo Ky'Ebika bya Abaganda*, supplement each other and together cover every aspect of the history of Kiganda society, dynastic, military, political, cultural and social. Kaggwa's sources were, as in contemporary historical fieldwork, oral traditions. Kaggwa acted as a collector of traditions for the missionary John Roscoe. The information he had collected for Roscoe in Luganda he wrote down and the notes provided the basis for his own writings. As Dr. Kiwanuka suggested, it seems that Kaggwa was prompted to write in Luganda what John Roscoe was already writing in English.<sup>37</sup>

There were many other Baganda historians writing in Luganda. The literary atmosphere provided by the mission stations and the publication of Apolo Kaggwa's works acted as a stimulus to Luganda historical as well as non-historical writing. Kaggwa's interest in recording the past was shared and followed by a number of his contemporaries who wrote to complement Kaggwa's books, correct him or provide a new information. They had consulted a wide variety of oral informants for the times past and, recalling the days of their youth, they were able to contribute much from their own first hand experience. Since 1911, when the White Fathers first published their newspaper *Munno*, the Baganda have been contributing historical articles in that paper as well as in *Ebifa*, a C. M. S. newspaper. Alifunsi

<sup>36</sup> Pawliková, Viera: Sir Apolo Kaggwa and the Origins of Luganda Literature. In: *Asian and African Studies*, XI, 1975, pp. 197-203.

<sup>37</sup> *The Kings of Buganda* by Sir Apolo Kaggwa, 256 pp. were translated and edited by M. S. M. Kiwanuka and published by East African Publishing House, Nairobi – Dar es Salaam – Kampala, in 1971 as the first volume in a new series of historical texts of Eastern and Central Africa. The part of *Basekabaka* covering the colonial period was, however, skipped from this publication. Roscoe, J.: *The Baganda. An Account of their Native Customs and Beliefs*. London, Macmillan and Co. Ltd. 1911.

Aliwali, who acted as a collector of oral traditions for Bishop Gorju,<sup>38</sup> has been one outstanding contributor to the missionary newspaper *Munno*. From among works by other Baganda historians, the following deserve to be mentioned here: Prince Gomotoka's massive seven volume hand written history of Buganda entitled appropriately *Makula (Treasure)*,<sup>39</sup> John Miti's unpublished *Short History of Buganda (Ebyafayo bya Buganda)*; Hamu Mukasa's three volumes of historical narrative and personal memoirs entitled *Simuda Nyuma (Don't Turn Back)* and the Rev. Bartalomayo Zimbe's *Buganda ne Kabaka (Buganda and Kabaka)* published on the Gambuze Press in 1938.<sup>40</sup> As Dr. Rowe has pointed out, there seems to have evolved a literary tradition in Buganda that ageing prominent Baganda of the turn of the century generation should set their pens to paper to revive their generation's *ekitibwa* (prestige), to recount their lives or expound their principles so that others may profit by their example. The sheer volume of early Luganda written sources, both published and unpublished which have been recently coming to light clearly demonstrate that the Baganda did like to write.<sup>41</sup> The wealth of family papers, for example, has only begun to be explored.<sup>42</sup>

The variety of fields Luganda writings covered was gradually increasing. In addition to the histories, military memoirs from the period of religious turmoil, booklets of moral admonition and practical instruction, biographies and political pamphlets, a flood of other writings started to appear, short stories, plays and novels as well as pamphlets devoted to giving advice on such matters as sex life, dream analysis and business success.<sup>43</sup>

Since the completion and publication of the first Luganda Bible, Protestant Bible translations into other languages of the present-day Uganda multiplied across

<sup>38</sup> Gorju, J. L.: *Entre le Victoria, l'Albert et l'Edouard*. Rennes, Imprimerie Oberthür 1920.

<sup>39</sup> Prince Gomotoka was the former *ssabalangira*. He began his book in 1920 as the history of the Baganda royal family. Two decades later, at the time of his death, it was not quite finished.

<sup>40</sup> The first volume of Mukasa's *Simuda Nyuma*, subtitled "*Ebiro bya Mutesa*" (*The Reign of Mutesa*), was published in London in 1938 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The second volume *Ebya Mwanga (That of Mwanga)* appeared in 1942 and the third volume allegedly sent to Bishop Willis in England, who was to have seen it through publication, was lost. Dr. Rowe discovered a carbon copy of the lost volume at Kwata Mpola House, the home of the late Hamu Mukasa, in March 1964. For details see his article, *Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition*, op.cit. An English translation of Miti's manuscript was also supposedly sent to Bishop Willis in England at about the same time as Mukasa's lost volume. See *ibid*.

<sup>41</sup> Rowe, J. A.: *Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition*, op. cit. See also Twaddle, Michael: On Ganda Historiography. In: *History in Africa*, 1, 1974, pp. 80-100.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>43</sup> Professor Rowe compiled a fairly complete bibliography of Luganda written sources, including published books and pamphlets, periodicals published before 1930, unpublished works and private papers. See *Bibliography of Luganda Written Sources* attached to Rowe, J. A.: *Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition*, op. cit. This can be compared and cross-checked with Snoxall's survey of Luganda literature. Snoxall, R. A.: *Ganda Literature*. African Studies, Vol. I, 1942, and a list of Luganda publications attached to M. Ch. Fallers *Ethnographic survey of Baganda and Basoga*. Fallers, M. Ch.: *The Eastern Lacustrine Bantu*, op. cit., Appendix II, Luganda Literature, pp. 74-76.

the country, the Scriptures in Luganda were published in 1896, in Runyoro/ Rutoro in 1912, in Alur 1955, in Ateso in 1961 and in Runyankore/Rukiga in 1964.<sup>44</sup> The role of the Bible translated in African languages was enormous. The publication of the Bible in full or in part was usually the first major publication in an African language and in many cases it remained for the long time the only publication that people could read in their own languages. Vast literary campaigns were carried on the translated portions of the Bible and ability to read a Gospel used to be a requirement for baptism, in the Church of Uganda and the Roman Catholic White Fathers. In 1968, the Bible Society of Buganda was formed. And when the ambivalent and hesitant attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the translations of the Scriptures was changed after the Second Vatican Council, Baganda Protestants and Catholics joined hands in 1970s to prepare a new, revised Luganda Bible.

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<sup>44</sup> Tuma, Tom. A. D. & Mutibwa, Phares (Eds.): *A Century of Christianity in Uganda, 1877-1977*, op. cit, pp. 95-96.