

THE EMERGENCE OF BUGANDA AS A DOMINANT POWER IN THE INTERLACUSTRINE REGION OF EAST AFRICA, 1600-1900

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Between 1600 and 1900 Buganda expanded territorially and politically. Because it was this two pronged growth which ensured Buganda's dominance of the interlacustrine region during the 19th Century, this paper will examine in detail the process which led to political centralization and territorial expansion. In the first instance we shall consider governmental and constitutional changes. Then we shall deal with the territorial changes which began in the 17th Century.

A close study of the political and constitutional developments suggests that there have been four major developments in the government of precolonial Buganda.¹ All these changes were closely connected with the country's territorial expansion. The first development really belongs to what we may describe as "pre-historic times" because it covers the *Kintu-Kimera* period, on which we have insufficient information.^{1a} It is, therefore, not until the coming to Buganda of more clans that historical accounts become detailed enough to enable us to reconstruct the history of Buganda of about 21 generations back.² But even after correlating evidence from the clan histories, it still remains difficult to determine with confidence the exact territorial extent of Buganda before the reign of Nakibinge in the early decades of the 16th Century.

What we can conclude from the scanty evidence at hand on the very early period Buganda originated from a small nucleus of the region covering much of the modern counties of Busiro, Mawokota and south Kyaddondo. Because the country was small it was not necessary to have a complex system of administration. It seems therefore that what existed then was a hierarchy of court officials with the king at the top. As the country gradually expanded a government machinery was set up beyond the boundaries of the court, and this brings us to the second important constitutional development.

An analysis of the clan histories suggests that one of the earliest administrative units to be established beyond the court was the county (Saza). These accounts further show that by the beginning of the 17th century the counties included the whole of modern Mawokota, Busiro, Kyaddondo, eastern Kyaggwe, portions of south Bulemezi and probably Busujju and parts of Ssinga. Although sources show that counties like Busiro, Mawokota, Butambala and Busujju were far larger than their modern boundaries suggest, it is not clear how far they extended. Writing in the 20th century when the boundaries of Buganda's twenty counties had been properly demarcated and surveyed, Sir Apolo

Kaggwa used the names and titles of the original counties without any explanation of their original size.³ He has thus unfortunately misled a number of writers who in their attempts to estimate the size of the original Buganda have based their conclusions on these modern boundaries.

However, it is clear from the historical accounts of the earliest counties that what eventually emerged as the Kiganda system of government grew out of the court hierarchy of officials.⁴ The best example is that of *Kaggo* who as the chief of the central county of Kyaddondo was the most important of, and took precedence over all other county chiefs. He was traditionally called *Sabaddu*, that is he was the head of all the royal servants. An analysis of his traditional duties further shows he was more of a court official than a territorial administrator. He used to fulfil all the taboos for the king if the latter wanted a representative, and as a supervisor of all the royal servants, his presence in the court was always necessary. The second subchief under him was the *Sabakaki* who was the chief of the pages and royal gate keepers. *Senkoole*, the third man under Kaggo, used to be in charge of the royal fuse for the sacred fire in the court and as its caretaker he too was one of the king's special servants. The original names and titles of other countries throw light also on the developments which were taking place in the country. The chief of Ssinga for example, was called *Sabagabo* (Head of the buckle bearers) and he was second in importance after Kaggo. Two deductions can be made from this. One is that the county of Ssinga became part of Buganda at a much earlier date than the records suggest, and also that warriors became an important class of people at a much earlier period. All these titles were not originally of territorial administrators as they later became, and one is, therefore, forced to the conclusion that as the country expanded, the court officials were turned into territorial governors.

A simultaneous development to be discerned from the beginning of the 15th century, took place when the districts which were either ruled by Bunyoro or by independent clan heads, became parts of Buganda. To illustrate this clearly one must go over the history of the clans who seem to fall into four different divisions. The first group claims to be native, the second group claims to have come into Buganda with Kintu, the third group with Kimera and the fourth group claims to have come to Buganda at a later period on their own: that is, they were not part of a large migrational band.⁵ But here we must sound a word of warning because some assertions of the clans have become such stereotypes that one suspects that they may not be true accounts but parts of the court traditions which purport to show that there had always been one unbroken dynasty of Kings from Kintu to Mutesa II. The general view among the clans is that Kintu came from the East of Uganda, fought with Bemba and having defeated him made himself King. He then united all the clans under his rule so the court mythology goes, gave them their ancestral estates and appointed them to various offices with territorial jurisdiction.

Modern historical interpretation has looked upon the story of Kintu as a new epoch representing the invasion of Luo migrants from Southern Sudan

who having conquered the Bantu of the Interlacustrine region, established themselves and founded the present Kingdoms. This interpretation must be closely related to the stories of the clans. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that there is evidence to show that the claims of the clans in general and the story of Kintu in particular are in need of revision.⁶ A careful study of clan histories reveals that many of their claims especially that they came with Kintu or Kimera, are hard to prove. The conflicting accounts of different sections of one clan regarding their journeys to Buganda suggest that members of one clan did not come into Buganda at the same time or even from the same direction. Similarly, evidence to support clan assertions that Kintu or Kimera instituted certain offices and gave estates to their ancestors are hard to come by.

The conclusion to be drawn from their numerous discrepancies and extravagant claims is that neither Kintu nor Kimera gave clans what they call today their ancestral lands. What seems to have happened is that during the period of migration different bands of people came from different directions and settled in much of what is central Buganda today. On discovering that they had the same totem, different bands merged their migrational story and others fused by intermarriage. And as the monarchy gradually became the fountain of all honours and privileges, clans found it useful to claim that such and such a King gave privileges to their ancestors. Kintu and Kimera being the heroes among the earlier kings, it was of great historical importance for the clans to date most of their claims to these rulers. All these factors are timely reminders that the hypothesis that Kintu united the clans and gave them territorial jurisdiction is hard to sustain.

If Kintu then did not unite the clans and if he did not put them in the offices they claim, who did? During the writer's field studies in Buganda a fairly successful effort was made to locate the ancestral lands of clans which linked their past with Kintu and Kimera. But an analysis of their histories showed that some of the districts in which they were located were originally ruled by an independent head of a clan. When Buganda absorbed these independent districts, existing clan heads were turned into agents of the King and some later became county chiefs. We have two excellent examples in the history of Busujju and Bulemezi counties. The chieftainship of Kasujju was hereditary in the grasshopper clan. The sources do not tell us when the grasshopper clan became chiefs of Busujju. Evidence from the local history of the country itself, however, shows that the grasshopper clan with their chief ancestral land at Kisozi in Gomba, were natives of this area and were probably its rulers from earliest times. When Busujju became part of Buganda their rule was recognised by the Kabaka and they became his agents.

Another example is of Nabugwamu of the Lungfish clan who appears to have been one of the local clan chiefs of Bulemezi. Contrary to the court traditions and the assertions of the *Lungfish clan*, one suspects that Nabugwamu became a Muganda chief because he was the ruler of that district when Buganda expanded in the direction probably after the reign of Nakibinge. During the

first half of the 17th century Buganda expanded to the west when King Kate-regga annexed Gomba and Butambala from Bunyoro. The sources show that the king made these two districts fully fledged counties and appointed his generals hereditary chiefs. Our sources, however, are not clear about the position of Mawokota county. The scanty information we have on this subject has tended to mislead rather than to enlighten historians. Evidence from Makula,⁷ another important source of Kiganda history, clearly shows that from the reign of Kimbugwe (first quarter of the 17th century) to that of Semakokiro (first decade of the 19th century) the chieftainship of Mawokota was hereditary among the princes. This evidence further undermines the assumption which has hitherto been believed that Buganda princes could not be chiefs.

The political structure developed along these lines and remained like that until the reign of Mutebi. That is the chieftainships in the then existing counties of Kyaddondo, Bulemezi, Kyagwe, Busiro, Butambala, Mawokota, Busujju, Gomba and probably Ssinga were still hereditary and limited to a few clans. Several interpretations have been made out of this political structure, but the theme which has often been emphasised by historians and social anthropologists is that the monarchy was not yet powerful enough to assert its authority over the hereditary clan chiefs and that the stage when the King could appoint chiefs of their own choice had not yet come. This same political structure does also suggest that the Kiganda monarchy emerged out of the clan system. Other evidence seems to confirm this view. For examples, writing about the conflicts of King Mutebi and the hereditary chief Kaggwa said, at first

The Notables were very important, ruling almost independently their own estates. But when their fellow king assumed a position of great dignity which exceeded theirs, he began to bully them and to usurp their rights;

All these are historical possibilities which cannot be treated lightly. But the most important deduction to be drawn from the political arrangement which has been discussed so far is that it was the result of haphazard expansion. With her small population Buganda could not adopt a policy of direct rule. It seems, therefore, that the policy she followed was not only due to the weak position of the king or to a desire on his part to downgrade the notables, but it was also the result of a lack of manpower. We now know that the first king to disturb this political arrangement was Mutebi, who dismissed the chiefs of Ssinga and Busujju counties and installed his personal favourites. The process of deprivation was prosecuted with increased determination by Mawanda (mid-18th century) when he dismissed the hereditary incumbents of the counties of Kyaddondo, Bulemezi, Kyaggwe, and many subchiefs. The actions of these two kings suggest on the one hand that the monarchy was now powerful and on the other that chieftainship was becoming competitive, with the kings able to appoint their own nominees. These actions can rightly be described as the beginnings of the policy of centralisation which is so characteristic of the

19th century monarchs and which was partly responsible for the emergence of Buganda as a powerful state.

This view however, need not be overstressed, because some of the evidence at hand suggests that Mutebi was forced to dismiss his chiefs because they had rebelled, and although we have no record of many similar rebellions, it is reasonable to assume that even in the previous reigns, a strong king could summarily dismiss a rebellious chief. Even when igwe come to the reign of Mawanda we find that he too was forced to take the same drastic step partly as a result of the events of the previous two reigns during which he himself had been an active participant. Despite the claim that Mawanda came to the throne as a popular hero, there is evidence to show that the political situation remained unsettled with rebellious chiefs still agog. These, coupled with the suspicion that sympathisers of the overthrown regime of Kagulu still remained in Kyaggwe, forced Mawanda to campaign in much of Buganda searching for pockets of resistance to his rule.

It needs no emphasis to note that any ruler faced with rebellion tends to have a small circle of loyalists upon whose absolute devotion he can depend. In connection with this, it is important to note that Mawanda was one of the greatest soldier kings in the whole history of Buganda. By the end of his reign he had extended his country's frontiers to the north of Ssinga and Bulemezi, he had brought the whole of Kaggwe under his rule, and he had even crossed the Nile and raided many of the Busoga states. During these expeditions a large number of men distinguished themselves not only for their unwavering loyalty but also for their bravery. One of these was Nkalubo Sebuggwawo who had successfully suppressed a rebellion in Busiro and had also fought fearlessly in Kyaggwe. He became one of Mawanda's favourite chiefs and besides being appointed county chief of Kyaggwe he got hereditary office at court. To a country which was beginning to live by and on plunder, brave warmen were highly prized and the conclusion arrived at here is that, like many of his contemporaries, Nkalubo won royal favour neither because of the romantic reasons given in the sources, nor because of the unlikely suggestion that he was Mawanda's father.

At first sight therefore, what appears to have happened was that in future only the successful warmen rather than clanheads were to become the dominant force in Buganda's politics. But a careful study of the events of many previous and future reigns clearly shows that what Mawanda did to the *Notables* was neither new nor drastic. Three generations before him, kings Kimbugwe and Kateregga had put the newly conquered districts of Butambala, Gomba and parts of Mawokota in charge of the men who had commanded the conquering expeditions. Two generations after Mawanda, king Junju did the same thing when he annexed Buddu and even as late as the reign of Mutesa (1856-1884) favourites of all descriptions, were being appointed to important chiefships, not because the kings had worked out a plan against the *Notables* or formulated a policy of how to centralise their powers. It is necessary to stress this because

of the many repeated accounts that the kings of Buganda had a policy against the Bataka.

For the kings it was not sufficient to give only women, cattle and slaves (the usual war spoils) to their favourite chiefs and great warriors. These gifts had to be accompanied by power, expressed in being territorial governors. Because Buganda was not a very big country the kings were forced either to dismiss the *Notables* (or to demote them) some of whom were too old to participate in the king's frequent warlike activities, or to divide up the already existing districts so as to install the new men. As the "*King's men*" flourished with privileges loaded upon them, the fame of the demoted traditional chiefs faded. This process was still going on when the British took over Uganda. Whether or not this was a deliberate policy directed against the traditional chiefs, it was bound in the long run to lead to royal centralisation. At the same time it increased social mobility and competition for royal favour.

Closely linked with the territorial expansion was the problem of settling new districts and of integrating their societies. The process of conquest is often complicated especially where the conquered territory had no prior state structure. If this happens the conquerors may have to bring in an army of colonists in order to make their political organisation accepted. This, however, is an unsatisfactory method and the best way would be to adopt a policy of indirect rule whereby the vanquished rule themselves but their chiefs accept the overlordship of the conquerors. The comparatively easy submission of the new population to Kiganda rule, gives the impression that as soon as annexation took place the new districts were at once occupied by Buganda colonists, numerous enough to give a vivid picture of their strength and the hopelessness of resistance. If this happened it would presuppose the existence of a large Baganda population part of which could be sent out as colonists. Lack of detailed evidence does not allow an accurate estimate of Buganda's population during the early period, but it seems that the population of 18th century Buganda was not large enough to allow any large scale colonization. If there were any groups of colonists, they must have been small. Faced with such a situation Buganda was forced to adopt a method of indirect rule, not because of any foresight or political wisdom of her rulers but because of the shortage of manpower.

The county of Buddu offers the best example of Kiganda methods of administration. Before its annexation by Junju the district was still vaguely part of the once far flung empire of Bunyoro. According to the history of the Buddu clans, Wunyi II, the Omukama of Bunyoro, appointed his nephew to rule Buddu with the title Pokino. Under Pokino were several chiefs some of whom probably came from Bunyoro at a much earlier date. By the time of its annexation by Buganda the Buddu pattern of chieftainship was clearly based on the clans. Some were big and ruled over extensive areas. But despite the existence of Pokino as the Omukama's chief agent, the clans and their leaders were independent. When Junju seized Buddu not only did the Baganda retain all

the titles of the "Indigenous" chiefs but their capitals became the administrative centres of the conquerors. With these methods applied by the Baganda, assimilation of the new populations became comparatively easier. It was assisted moreover, by a net-work of clan relationships of the Banabuddu which were very similar to those of Buganda. This meant that there was no need for the conquerors to bring about changes which would transform the social structures of the vanquished. Such became the practice everywhere in the newly conquered areas and so it continued until the dawn of the colonial period.

With her extensive border districts, 19th century Buganda would appear to have been a kingdom of provinces, a kind of federation with a king sitting far way in the central districts with the marcher chiefs left very much on their own. Writing about government in pre-colonial Buganda the missionary J. Roscoe seemed to confirm this view, " . . . A chief's county seat was more like a small town, than a village, for there he was supreme and living in great state and having a large enclosure in which there were often hundreds of women and slaves . . . In the provinces the District chief was the principal magistrate and he had his subchiefs to assist him in trying the cases . . ." From this account we would deduce that as the country expanded and required more men to run the government, the kings were forced to delegate more of their authority which may weaken their constitutional position vis-a-vis the chiefs. However, these seemingly adverse effects on the king's position were more apparent than real, because of the jealousy of the chiefs for each other and the intense competition which existed for royal favour. All these factors helped to increase the king's authority over the chiefs more than ever before. For example, foreign observers who visited Mutesa I's court between 1860-80, thought that he was the most powerful despot in the whole of central Africa.

The fourth major constitutional change took place in the 19th century. From about 1750 to the end of our period remarkable social and political developments had taken place inside and outside Buganda. Internally the monarchy had become the strongest instrument of government, and externally Buganda was not only claiming suzerainty over the kingdoms of Kooki, Kiziba and the Busoga states, but her armies were also raiding in all directions. It is important to consider in this connection that a country's social organisation can be affected by war in various ways. Its need for men may starve its agriculture and other industries, either temporarily or for long periods particularly when casualties have been heavy. Should the country win the wars it would be compensated for these losses. At first sight therefore it would seem that a century of constant campaigning and raids would have ruined Buganda; but all our sources show that compared to other states in the interlacustrine region, Buganda, was remarkably strong and prosperous. Some of the factors which brought about these changes were partly economic and partly political. These have been variously treated by historians and anthropologists, and we do not need to repeat them here.

The area which now needs more detailed study is that of the military because military factors and the question of leadership were of vital importance to Buganda. The sources show that many kings such as Kateregga, Mawanda, Kyabaggu, Junju, Semakokiro and Kamanya were talented generals. The conquests they made and Buganda's emergence as a great power testifies to this. Kinyoro sources on the other hand show that until the emergence of Kabarega in 1896 Bunyoro lacked strong leadership for nearly a century. This led (though partly) to her decline as a military power. When we turn to specifically military factors such as the scale of warfare and the size of armies, our records shows that after the disastrous wars of Nakibinge, Buganda avoided military adventures until the reign of Kateregga during the second quarter of the 17th century. Even then, it seems that the armies were small and expeditions were on a modest scale. Kinyoro sources on the other hand show that for nearly the whole of the 16th century her kings continued to raid far and wide, and sometimes with disastrous results. Another factor of great military importance to Buganda was that during the 18th and 19th centuries most of her wars were waged beyond her frontiers which saved her from devastation. This was largely the result of her military superiority which enabled her to carry the war into the enemy's camp. But there was also an economic imperative. Buganda was chronically poor in cattle and goats, the two things which whetted the cupidity of neighbouring states. This poverty acted upon Buganda as a stimulant to raid her neighbours and as a protection from being raided.

Before Mawanda's conquest of Kyaggwe and Junju's annexation of Buddu, Buganda's supply of iron ore was very scanty. Lack of iron meant shortage of weapons and we learn that king Nakibinge's difficulty in fighting with the Banyoro was due to his limited supply of weapons. Buganda's annexation of the above mentioned districts must have been a great military loss to Bunyoro, not only in manpower but also as important sources of iron and experienced smiths who used to make the weapons. Thus by contrast with the 18th century, Buganda armies in the 19th century had become enormous and warfare was on a large scale. This brings us to another important factor namely military organization. The possibility of conducting fairly extensive and successful military operations had to depend on the possession of manpower, equipment and a highly developed system of military organisation.

Buganda's military success in the 19th century creates two presumptions. One is that she probably possessed a weaponry advantage over Bunyoro. There is no specific evidence to show that there was a natural increase of Buganda's population at this time, but it would be reasonable to assume that a century of successful raids must have brought her a large number of captives, women, men and children, who if not killed would enormously swell the existing population. Moreover, once the kingdoms of Kooki, Kiziba and the Busoga states were incorporated into the Buganda political complex, her recruiting ground similarly extended. Suna II for instance found it necessary to extend his capital to an enormously large size. The inference here seems to be that the extension

of the royal capital was necessitated by an increased number of his wives and their maids, and the very large number of pages. If there was thus an overflow of population at the capital one would assume that there was also a general increase in the country as a whole because the chiefs also received a share of the war spoils.

What is remarkable in this connection is that this period saw also the foundation of a large number of *Ebitongole*. The first record of *Ebitongole* we have in the published works dates only to the reign of Kamanya (C. 1814?-1832). This has created the impression that Bitongole were a 19th century feature and this assumption has led to rather misleading interpretations of their functions. The best description of *Ekitongole* is a Department (in the French sense), meaning an administrative unit below the status and size of the county. Like the counties, Bitongole varied in size and importance, and there is evidence to suggest that they were originally departments within the royal court. As the country expanded and population increased they became territorial divisions with administrative jurisdiction, and this is most probably why a very large number of them were founded in the 19th century. Kings usually named the most important Bitongole after themselves; for example during Mukabya's reign the *Ekitongole Ekikabya* was the largest and most important with even greater prestige than some of the counties.

Some historians look upon the Bitongole not only as military regiments but also as privileged organisations of chiefs specially appointed by the kings to act as a bulwark against the old order of the county chiefs and the Bataka. This is one of the themes discussed in recent publications on Buganda. Writers who have held this view seem to have based their conclusion primarily on the evidence from 20th century chiefs led by Kaggwa, who had a controversy with the Notables, (The Bataka). The chiefs who owed their positions to their co-operation with the British regarded themselves as the *Batongole* of the pre-colonial days; With his knowledge of Buganda history, Kaggwa was able to manipulate the facts to the advantage of the British appointed chiefs. There is a great deal of evidence however to show that Kaggwa was wrong, because neither the Prime Minister (as Kaggwa was) nor the county chiefs were called Batongole in pre-colonial Buganda as Kaggwa and his group claimed. What has been described as the privileged position of the Batongole compared to other orders of chiefs was also an invention of Kaggwa and his contemporaries.

Sources further show that all important chiefs, Batongole as well as county, were not only appointed by the king, but also directly responsible to him. A close study of the origins and careers of Mutesa's Batongole suggests that the majority of them were appointed from court pages some of whom were greater favourites of the king than the big county chiefs. If a king was a young man, many of his pages would be of his own age, which could increase the gulf between him and his old chiefs. In such circumstances the appointment of one of the pages to be a Mutongole could mean that he was one of the closest

friends of the king, and as such he would have every privilege showered upon him. A statement from Kaggwa's papers sums this up very well.

If a king appointed a new chief or a Mutongole, many people would flock to his district, because they believed that he was a great favourite of the king. Now because kings often appointed their favourites to be commanders of raiding expeditions this meant that his (the general men) would be the first to loot and thereby enrich themselves and their masters.⁹

This then appears to be the privileged position of the Batongole, which was more apparent than real because royal favour was not confined to Batongole or to chiefs. Suna is said to have given privileges to hunters because he himself loved hunting. Mutesa created Balikumbuga, a Musoga dancer, a prince of the realm, because Mutesa admired and respected the performing Arts.

In another sense, Bitongole can also be regarded as military organisations founded for the defence particularly of the frontiers. During the reigns of Semakokiro and Kamanya, Buganda was badly menaced by Kakungulu, a rival claimant for the throne. Kakungulu's military exploits were given active support by Kyebambe III, the king of Bunyoro. For two successive reigns Kakungulu devastated vast districts of northern Ssinga and north-east Kyaggwe and he did it with such annoying mobility that every time a Buganda army was sent to fight him it found that he had already pillaged and retired to Bunyoro. During this same period the inhabitants of south Lango and Teso often crossed Lake Kyoga and raided parts of North-East Buganda. Furthermore during the first half of the 19th century, the situation in Busoga states was sometimes very serious because Buganda's suzerainty was being constantly challenged. For example on more than one occasion the Busoga crossed the Nile and pillaged the eastern districts of Kyaggwe. It may well be that these border areas which were being raided had small populations which meant they could not defend themselves.

The foundation of many Bitongole therefore and the worsening military situation on the borders was no mere coincidence because the kings must have come to the conclusion that the best way to save these districts from devastation was to plant them with new populations. The sources are correct in showing most of the Bitongole founded by kings Kamanya and Suna as having been in Kyaggwe, because as we have pointed out, these were the areas suffering from invasions. Moreover, whenever the Busoga states rebelled as they often did, it was generally the duty of the county chief of Kyaggwe to conduct punitive expeditions, unless the situation was too serious to call for more men from other counties. Writing about the reign of Mutesa, Sir Apolo Kaggwa referred to the *Kitongole Ekijasi* as one of the *Abaserikale*. This generalisation in Kaggwa coupled with the circumstances which led to the founding of more Bitongole during the 19th century have resulted in a wrong interpretation of the role of the Bitongole.

Perhaps the most misleading source in this connection apart from Kaggwa

was the missionary Rev. Father Leveux. With his knowledge of military organisation in other parts of Africa, Leveux was also to draw a distinction between the word *Baserikale* which the Baganda are said to have applied to the *Ekitongole Ekijasi*; and the word *Batabazi*, the traditional term for warriors. Writing about the army and the Majaasi, that is the chief of *Ekitongole Ekijasi*, Leveux had this to say:

Omujaasi: Le chef des troupes royales. Le Roi de Dahomey a ses troupes regulieres permanentes: il a les soflimatas (Baserikale: askaris du Bouganda) et les amazones, deux corps qui sont la bande du Roi. Quand le Roi fait un appel de troupes pour la guerre tout homme est soldat (Omutabazi).¹⁰

Like many foreign observers, Leveux looked upon the *Ekitongole Ekijasi* as a permanent military organisation and his views have been expanded with greater elaboration. Dr. Southwold for example wrote:

Mutesa made an important innovation in military organisation with the formation of Ekijasi Batongole department: and although it did not live in barracks it seems virtually to have constituted a standing army . . . It may be assumed that a major reason for forming the Kijasi department was the need to remodel the Ganda forces to cope with the military organisations of the powers then beginning to intrude upon Buganda; and its organisation was probably based upon what Mutesa learnt from the Arab traders at his court of the organisation of foreign armies.¹¹ . . .

During the writer's field studies in Buganda a careful inquiry was made into the foundation, duties and indeed the whole history of Ekijasi, and the information then obtained clearly showed that at the beginning this Kitongole was no more than a royal bodyguard. It is in fact very doubtful whether the Ekitongole Ekijasi existed before Mwanga's time. If it existed at all, it had nothing to do with the traditional military organisation. Evidence from Sir Apolo Kaggwa's brilliant description of Kiganda military systems, shows that Buganda armies which were so responsible for her expansion were not permanent organisations because there were no regular troops. War was never a full time occupation even on the frontiers except in as much as raids were frequent. Armies were mobilised as and when required with every chief supplying his quota. Estimates of Buganda armies were difficult, but one suspects that as many people as wanted could go to war and every male was thus a potential warrior. Similarly every chief, whatever his rank, could be a general not necessarily because of his soldierly qualities, but because of his standing in the eyes of the king or of the Queen mother.

During peace-time all chiefs including the Batongole were administrators, but once war came they became the commanders of the "regiments" formed from their districts. Overall command of a whole expedition was given either to a favourite or to a chief whose district had been raided. If a county chief went to war all the men from his county including the Batongole would be under him. The only occasion where such practice was not followed was when one of the Batongole had been appointed to command the expedition. Then

men from his own district would not come under the overall command of the county chief. What is more significant in this connection is that no *Mujasi* commanded an expedition during Mutesa's reign, nor did his Kitongole possess the monopoly of guns. Furthermore the Ekijasi Kitongole did not have the size and prestige of the Ekitongole Kikabya as one might have expected. In fact the *Mujasi* and his Kitongole became famous during the late 1880's with the outbreak of the civil-religious wars.

If Bitongole were not regiments why were so many founded at the time when Buganda's military situation seemed to be worsening? The first answer seems to be that there was a desire for increased efficiency in the administration. As the chief's duties were primarily administrative a new district to which he had been appointed would at once have major roads leading to the capital and to the residence of the county chiefs. In addition to these would be a network of minor roads. Such close administration did not only increase efficiency, but ensured also rapid recruitment and movements of troops if war came. If the 19th century armies were larger and more successful it was not only due to advanced military organisation but also to increased efficiency in the administrative machinery.

The other reason seems to be that there was overpopulation at the royal capital partly as a result of the general increase in the county and partly as a result of the royal policy of centralisation which required chiefs to reside at the capital where they too had a large number of women and servants. A careful study of the sources from the local histories of what were border districts in the 19th century suggests that these areas were sparsely peopled until Bitongole were planted there. As the administrative and military duties of a Buganda chief went together, the planting of a Kitongole in an area meant that with its increased supply of men, the district could defend itself against most invasions.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have traced the stages and processes which led to the emergence of Buganda as a dominant power in the Interlacustrine region of East Africa. The dominance began really in the 18th century and continued until it was interrupted and eventually stopped by imposition of colonial rule. The factors responsible were both internal as well as external. The internal factors were the long line of able rulers such as Kateregga, Mutebi, Mawanda, Junju, Semakokiro up to Mutesa I. These men expanded their powers at the expense of the *Notables* and when they created a class of appointed chiefs, royal centralisation reached its height. Internally too, Buganda became wealthier and as she did so her rulers were once again able to centralise not only power but wealth. The external factors were mainly the decline of Bunyoro from the 18th century. Bunyoro never recovered despite the emergence of Kabarega during the second half of the 19th century. Kabarega never fought against Buganda unless he was attacked by the Baganda and until his deposition by the British, his main preoccupation was the conquest of Bunyoro's lost provinces in Western

Uganda. Buganda's warrior kings took advantage of Bunyoro's decline and expanded the kingdom at the expense of its neighbours.

FOOTNOTES

1. The most up-to-date study of precolonial Buganda is by Semakula Kiwanuka *A History of Buganda from the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900* (London, 1972).
- 1a. The *Kintu Kimera* period covers a period of about 200 years, from the 13th to the 15th centuries. (1200-1400).
2. A generation here is computed at 30 years. See M. S. M. Kiwanuka, (ed) *The Kings of Buganda* (E.A. Publishing House, 1971) Other Scholars, such as R. Oliver & B. Ogot have adopted 26 years as the length of a generation.
3. Sir Apollo Kaggwa's works include *Empisa za Baganda* (The customs of the Baganda) in which he dealt extensively with the administration of the Kingdom.
4. This is a common development in all Monarchies.
5. See Sir Apolo Kaggwa, *Ebika bya Baganda* (The Clans of the Baganda N.d.).
6. See S. Kiwanuka, *History of Buganda*.
7. By Sabalangira Gamotoka. A microfilm of the Ms. is available in the Makerere University Library.
8. *Empisa*, *Op. cit.*, p.
9. Sir Apolo Kaggwa's papers are deposited in the Makerere University Library.
note 10
11. Chieftainship and Bureaucracy in Buganda.