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Kenya: nineteenth century, precolonial

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at the Nkalany, as did some of the proper names. Today the Mukulweji is a no-man's land, near the borders of groups speaking Ndembu, kiLuba (but with matrilineal social systems and without the Luba political culture better known from farther northeast), and Sanga (another Luba dialect), with pockets of Ruund. The *kazembe wa lukoji* and the *mwata kazembe* of the Luapula were not alone; other southern Lunda titles tracing their origins to the Mukulweji include another *kazembe* in the Kechila salt marshes, *kanongesha*, *musokantanda*, and *ishindi*.

The most ancient praise songs among the Luapula Lunda are composed in kiLuba; the title *musokantanda* literally means "he who burns the land" in the same language. On the other hand, Mutand, the original captain sent by the Lunda court to carve out provinces in the south, and his successors have praise name elements suggesting Kete origins from outside the area, consistent with the *mwant yav* harnessing an ambitious young leader on the northern marches of his domain by sending him to the far south with royal blessing. The Eastern Lunda dynasty does not claim royal blood as descendants of a *mwant yav* but from a nephew of Ruwej, consonant both with their former great power and wealth and with only a tenuous biological connection with the Nkalany. It speaks of Nfwembe's clan, non-existent among the Ruund, and of a clan name that exists among the southern Luba of the Congo copperbelt. While there was likely Ruund participation in the Mukulweji conquest, it is clear that Lundahood is here a political rather than ethnic reality.

The Lunda who then settled in the Luapula valley conquered the Shila ("indigenous fishermen") living there previously. Calling themselves baLunda or bakaLunda, the conquerors were themselves divided into three subgroups: "true Lunda" (including the royal family above), the Bena Lualaba (absorbed during residence at Kechila), and the Bena Nkumwimba who came later. Intermarrying with the indigenous peoples, the Eastern Lunda dynasty claimed authority over groups living from the Lualaba to the approaches to Lake Nyasa. Lunda titles were generally held by people inheriting eligibility through a male line, yet the same individuals could participate in matrilineal clan politics at one stage of life and "patrilineal" royalty at another. The kiLuba praise songs anchoring the dynasty to the west are not the only sign of their origins on the Lualaba; the chief who installs a new *mwata kazembe* represents a group from there rather than the indigenous Shila of the Luapula, as could be expected. Nonetheless, many major officials bore titles known from the Ruund, and royal insignia were derived from the Nkalany.

The Eastern Lunda state was flourishing in the early nineteenth century when visited by the Portuguese expedition of Gamitto, following Bisa trading routes.

The capital was a substantial urban entity, court protocol was refined, and the chief's authority was widely recognized in principle. Certainly its authority over the Sanga peoples (matrilineal Luba) of the Congolese copperbelt was sufficient to produce a marked Lunda influence on their political institutions. The Eastern Lunda successor state retained the Lunda constitutional model that had been established at the Mukulweji, and its continued similarity shows their faithfulness to it once adopted. The Eastern Lunda state developed into a much more complex society than that which had existed at the Mukulweji and therefore shows greater innovation in court titles than the smaller *kazembe* courts at Kechila and the Lukoji, but the Eastern Lunda may have obtained some titles and insignia through later borrowing from the Ruund, for the two major courts kept up regular commercial and political contact. When the *pombeiros* (agents responsible for obtaining slaves) crossed the continent from Angola to Mozambique at the start of the nineteenth century, their route led them from the Nkalany through the Luapula.

JEFF HOOVER

See also: **Lunda.**

Further Reading

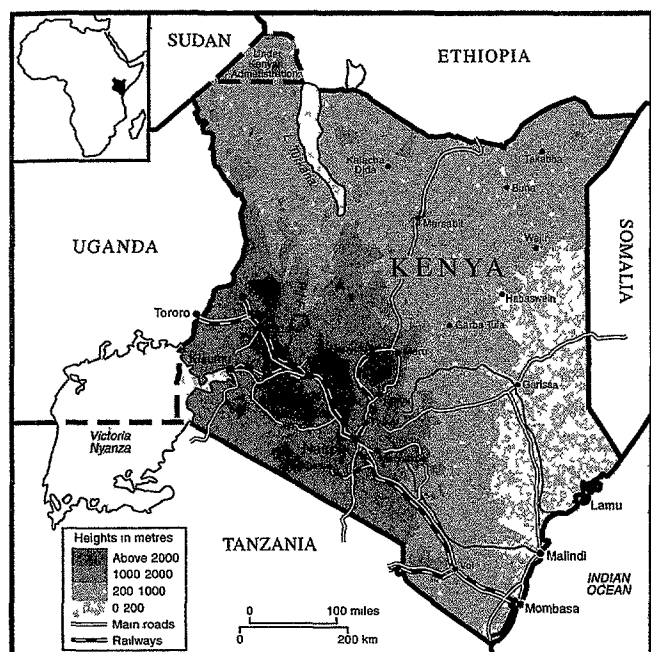
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Keita, Modibo: See Mali, Republic of:
Keita, Modibo, Life and Era of.

Kenya: Nineteenth Century: Precolonial

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the East African interior was still a very secluded region in comparison with other areas of Africa. With its focus on the Eastern trade, neither the Swahili Arabs nor the Portuguese ventured beyond the small stretch of land along the Indian Ocean. The latter had ruled from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century but by the early eighteenth century Arabs from Oman had taken over the coastal zone near the equator. They started slowly

KENYA: NINETEENTH CENTURY: PRECOLONIAL



Kenya.

to penetrate the interior, moving toward the Buganda kingdom near Lake Victoria, albeit by a southern route. They mostly shunned the northern stretch of land that in the twentieth century would become known as Kenya.

During the nineteenth century, Kenya underwent tremendous changes and yet also retained a degree of continuity. While the period witnessed the end of the relative isolation of African societies in the interior, it marked the reduction of the relative significance of the cosmopolitan Islamic coast. Both areas experienced a process of evolution, expansion, and differentiation that facilitated the emergence of practices and institutions which would be interrupted by colonialism at the end of the nineteenth century. However, neither the interior nor the coast showed any reduced dependence on agriculture and trade as a means of survival and stimuli for change.

Several ethnic groups varying in size, internal organization, and language, such as the Bantus, Cushites, and Nilotes, constituted nineteenth century Kenya. Patterns of life among these groups demonstrated a strong relationship between the environment and internal evolution and extra-ethnic relations. Broadly, crop production and pastoralism shaped ethnic distribution, power, and influence. They determined not only group survival and expansion but also whether a community was sedentary or nomadic. Thus, land was to crop producers what pasture and water were to pastoralists, significant aspects of group life and class differentiation on the one hand, and sources of internal and external disputes on the other.

The Bantu-speaking groups monopolized crop production since they inhabited some of the richest agricultural lands in central and southwestern Kenya. With adequate rainfall and its loam fertile soils central Kenya nurtured one of the largest Bantu groups, the Kikuyu, who with their Mount Kenya neighbors, the Embu and Meru, were fairly self-sufficient in food production. All three groups grew beans, peas, sweet potatoes, sorghum, arrowroot, and millet besides taming goats, sheep, and cattle, albeit not on a similar scale to their pastoral neighbors, the Maasai.

Agriculture fundamentally influenced the internal evolution and external relations of the Mount Kenya Bantu throughout the nineteenth century. Internally, agriculture enhanced population increase and strengthened sedentary life, the two distinct features of farming communities as compared to pastoral ones in precolonial Kenya. Also, social organization, political leadership, religious rites, and technological innovation revolved around agriculture and land. Among the Kikuyu, for example, the "office" of the *Muthamaki* (the head of the extended family) evolved mainly to oversee land allocation, distribution, and arbitration over land disputes.

Externally, agriculture nurtured constant trade links between the Mount Kenya Bantu and their southern neighbors, the Bantu-speaking Akamba, and the Maasai due to the semiarid conditions and the overdependency on the cattle economy. The Akamba constantly imported food from the Mount Kenya areas. This led to the creation of strong regional networks of interdependency sustained mainly by the Akamba *Kuthuua* (food) traders. They exchanged beer, animal skins, honey, and beeswax for the Mount Kenya staples of beans, arrowroot, and yams. Indeed, for most of the nineteenth century the Akamba played a prominent role not only as regional traders but also as long-distance (especially ivory) traders. They were intermediaries between the coastal Mijikenda and the Kenyan hinterland. From the second half of the nineteenth century their position weakened when the Zanzibar traders became involved in direct commerce in the Lake Victoria region and northern regions such as Embu, as elephants had become depleted in the more central areas. They exchanged cloth and metal rings for ivory and occasionally for slaves.

In western Kenya the Nilotic Luo and Bantu-speaking Luyhia practiced mixed farming, rearing animals, and cultivating crops. The Luo were originally pastoralists but gradually changed to mixed farming as a result of their migration to the Lake Victoria region and its attendant effects on their predominantly cattle economy. During a significant part of the nineteenth century their social, economic, and political institutions, like those of the Mount Kenya people, revolved around the importance attached to land. Increased pressure on land and subsequent disputes orchestrated the

evolution of *Pinje*, quasipolitical territorial units, among the Luo. The *Pinje* enhanced corporate identity besides protecting corporate land rights. External aggression toward their neighbors, particularly the Nilotic Nandi, Luyhia, and Gusii, added further impetus to the Luo identity in the nineteenth century. Kalenjin inhabitants (Sebei groups) of the Mount Elgon area were similarly involved in intensive intertribal warfare throughout the nineteenth century with neighboring groups, mostly Karamojong, Nandi, and Pokot pastoral groups. The Luyhia, like their Luo and Kalenjin counterparts in western Kenya, were also characterized by internal rivalry and external confrontation with neighbors over land and pasture. Among the major causes of the fighting were periodic droughts and famine; the latter occurring at least once every decade.

Some sections of the Luyhia, such as the Bukusu, kept animals while others such as the Kisa, Maragoli, Banyore, and Marama practiced farming. The less numerous and isolated Bantu-speaking Gusii further up the highlands of southwestern Kenya underwent similar economic changes to those of the Luo and Luyhia. Once avowed pastoralists when living on the Kano Plains of the Lake basin, they gradually lost their affinity with cattle with their migration to the present-day Gusii Highlands. They turned to crop production and reduced the numbers of animals they kept. Regional trade that involved the exchange of goods produced by different groups provided interethnic linkages and coexistence that mitigated against land-based conflicts among the various ethnic groups of western Kenya in the nineteenth century.

Providing an economic contrast to the Bantu-dominated agriculture were the Nilotic-speaking ethnic groups such as the Turkana, Nandi, and Maasai, who practiced pastoralism. They controlled large chunks of territories in nineteenth century Kenya partly because of the requirements of the nomadic pastoralism they practiced and their inherent militarism. Of all the pastoral groups in Kenya the Maasai were a power to be reckoned with. Their force had risen since the eighteenth century and culminated in a complex southward movement by Maa-speakers from the area to the west and south of Lake Turkana south to present-day Tanzania. By doing so they conquered, assimilated, and pushed aside other groups in the Rift valley.

However, unlike the Kikuyu who enjoyed increased prosperity and demographic increase, Maasai power declined tremendously during the nineteenth century in the face of climatic disasters that annihilated their predominantly cattle economy, internal strife that led to the partition of the Maasai into contending groups, and human and animal epidemics that reduced their population and cattle stocks. The Maasai were weakened by the succession disputes of the last years of the

nineteenth century. At the dawn of colonialism they had been replaced by the Nandi who emerged as the dominant power in western Kenya and resisted European penetration. In the northeast a similar change of power occurred. Since the sixteenth century Galla pastoralists had aggressively expanded southward from southern Ethiopia and Somalia. They finally reached Mombasa and occupied the lowland areas behind the coastal strip. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the Galla, weakened by disease, had suffered several defeats at the hands of the Somali and gradually withdrew. Drought and rinderpest epidemics that swept through their cattle in the last decades of the century weakened them still further. This allowed the Mijikenda, although they suffered periodically from cattle raids by Maasai groups, to move slowly outward from the coastal zone in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The Kenyan coast, unlike the interior, had experienced historical links with the outside world long before the nineteenth century. The Arabs dominated the area from the tenth century onward with an interlude of Portuguese rule and economic monopoly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With the ousting of the Portuguese, the nineteenth century saw the reestablishment of the Oman Arabs' rule that for economic and political reasons was consummated by the transfer of their headquarters from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840.

The politically semiautonomous settlements and trading posts such as Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, Pate, Faza, and Siu remained as much an enduring feature of the Kenya coast in the nineteenth century as it had been in the previous century. The towns had strong ties between themselves based on religious, linguistic, and economic homogeneity. Islam was the dominant religion in the same way that Swahili was the prevalent lingua franca. Agriculture and trade remained the backbone of the coastal economy. Mainly practiced by the rich Arab families, agriculture's economic significance continued apace with demands for agrarian produce in the Indian Ocean trade. Local trade between the hinterland and the coast was in the hands of interior middlemen and the coastal Bantu-speaking Mijikenda.

Despite the above developments, the resurgence of Zanzibar as the heart of commercial traffic and activity stimulated the gradual decline of the economic and political significance of Kenyan coastal towns. The dawn of colonialism in the 1890s added further impetus in that direction. The establishment of various colonial administrative posts in the interior, the building of the Uganda Railway (1896–1901) and the shifting of the colonial headquarters from Mombasa to Nairobi diverted attention from the coastal towns in the opening years of the twentieth century.

One of the most important discoveries that made the interior of Kenya known to the Northern hemisphere had

KENYA: EAST AFRICAN PROTECTORATE AND THE UGANDA RAILWAY

been the confirmation of the existence of snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya. A German missionary Johann Rebmann saw Mount Kilimanjaro in 1848. He had arrived in Kenya to assist Johann Krapf in Rabai Mpia, a small village to the northwest of Mombasa. Both worked for the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of London, a Protestant mission founded in 1799. The work of the CMS and other Christian missionaries was the main European activity in East Africa before partition.

Although Christian missionaries pioneered European entry into Kenya, they were not responsible for the establishment of European political control that came about mainly as a result of happenings outside East Africa. French-British rivalry, both in Europe where Napoleon's defeat transferred the Seychelles and Mauritius among others to Britain, and in Africa especially due to interests in Egypt, should be mentioned. This triggered a scramble for the East African interior, in particular to control the source of the river Nile. The rising power of Germany in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, resulting in claims for the Dar es Salaam region, forced Britain to act. British and German chartered companies divided mainland territories that formerly belonged to the sultan of Zanzibar. Soon Britain took over from the Imperial British East Africa Company and a boundary stretching from the coast to Lake Victoria was drawn between British and German East Africa in 1895. Thus, it took until the end of the nineteenth century for Kenya to be explored, evangelized, and finally conquered by Britain.

The arrival of European colonizers put an end to the dynamic spheres of influence and changing fortunes of the African groups. Settlers were encouraged to come to East Africa to recoup some of the costs incurred in the construction of the Uganda railway. Soon Kenya was to be transformed from a footpath a thousand kilometers long into a colonial administration that would redefine internal power.

KENNETH SAMSON OMBONGI AND MARCEL RUTTEN

See also: Kenya: East African Protectorate and the Uganda Railway; Religion, Colonial Africa: Missionaries; Rinderpest, and Smallpox: East and Southern Africa.

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Kenya: East African Protectorate and the Uganda Railway

The early history of the East African Protectorate (after 1920 the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya) was intimately linked with the construction of the Uganda railway. The completion of the railway had an immense impact on the protectorate.

The decision of the British government to formally annex Uganda as a British protectorate in 1894 necessitated the building of a railway to connect the area around Lake Victoria with the Indian Ocean coast. Nevertheless, it was not until July 1, 1895, that British authority was formally proclaimed over the territory stretching from the eastern boundary of Uganda, then approximately fifty miles west of present day Nairobi. It was called the East African Protectorate (EAP).

Having formally claimed this part of East Africa, the imperial government undertook to build the railway through the EAP for strategic and economic reasons. It was believed that a railway would help foster British trade in the interior as well as provide the means for maintaining British control over the source of the Nile. Politicians in Britain also justified the construction of the railway by arguing that it would help to wipe out the slave trade in the region. Construction of what became known as the Uganda railway began on Mombasa Island with the laying of the ceremonial first rail in May 1896. The British parliament approved a sum of £3 million for construction in August, though not without opposition from critics who claimed that the railway "started from nowhere" and "went nowhere."

Construction began on the mainland in August, and the railhead reached Nairobi, which became the railway headquarters, in 1899. The line reached Uganda in the following year and was completed to Port Florence (later Kisumu) on Lake Victoria in December 1901. From Mombasa to Kisumu, the railway was 582 miles in length. At £5,502,592, actual expenditure far exceeded the initial provision of funds by Parliament. The cost of the line was borne by the British taxpayer. The bulk of the labor used for construction, on the other hand, was provided by "coolies" recruited in British India. Slightly more than 20 per cent of these remained in Kenya following completion of the line; they