

Bible Translation and the Formation of Corporate Identity in Uganda and Congo 1900 - 1940.¹

ABSTRACT

Engaging debates around ethnic nationhood and knowledge production, this article examines the influence of Bible translation on corporate identity formation in Toro and Ituri (1900-1940). It studies translations instigated by one individual to investigate textual agency wherever it leads. The translator, Apolo Kivebulaya, promoted adherence to Christianity as an inclusive and linguistically-plural global community. His translation for the Mbuti, which had limited circulation among its intended audience, shows an aspect of this global community at work, remaking the international image of the Mbuti. His earlier Runyoro-Rutoro translation, however, encouraged a local and political form of corporate identity in which translation and Old Testament stories helped to form an ethnic moral economy. In focusing upon Bible translation amongst the Toro and the Mbuti, the article moves from the politically influential Ganda, the focus of much historiography of Christianity in East Africa, and explains the roots of later revivalism and patriotism.

INTRODUCTION

The missionary impetus to translate the Bible into vernacular languages in sub-Saharan Africa has been understood to engender aspirations of nationhood – for ethnic polities and

¹ I am grateful to Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell and two reviewers for their helpful comments.

for independent states.² Bible translation has also been recognised as contribution to scientific knowledge through its linguistic and cultural work.³ These existing scholarly interpretations are re-visited through scrutinising the historical trajectories of translations instigated by one well-documented individual and by analysing their use in creating ethno-national and transnational theologies.

Apolo Kivebulaya (c.1865-1933), an Anglican priest from Buganda, spent almost forty years establishing a network of small village churches in Toro, Western Uganda and Ituri, Eastern Congo.⁴ With European and African associates, he translated portions of scripture into Runyoro-Rutoro from 1895 and the language of the Mbuti from c.1925. Translators like Kivebulaya were committed to a transnational vision, but at the same time, their translations also bolstered ethnic politics. Kivebulaya and his associates used the Bible and its translation to create local forms of an international Christian identity, whilst the two translations he instigated also took on other identity forming roles. The Runyoro-Rutoro translation fuelled an early ethnic nationalism developed in competition with the Ganda. The vernacular translation for the Mbuti, nomadic hunter-gatherers of the Ituri forest in Belgian Congo, gives little information about Mbuti self-identity. Rather Kivebulaya's translation work encouraged a transnational network of scholars and translators to make

² JDY Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Indiana, 2000), 282. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* (Maryknoll, NY, 1989).

³ Patrick Harries and David Maxwell, 'Introduction' in Patrick Harries and David Maxwell (eds), *The Spiritual and the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI; 2012), 1-29.

⁴ See Makerere University (MAK), Africana collection, 'Anne Luck' box, for Kivebulaya's diaries and oral accounts of his life.

claims for how the Mbuti should be understood as part of a broader, international social collective. Thus the article argues that Bible translation aided the development of ethnic identities – a familiar claim in the literature - whilst also providing communities of belonging that were global in scope – an under-investigated claim.

CORPORATE IDENTITY

Benedict Anderson considered the standardization of language and introduction of print - media to be essential in propagating shared values, narratives and systems which in the modern era formed the complex moral community of the nation.⁵ Contrary to Anderson's view of nationhood as a secular trend, scholars of Sub-Saharan Africa have identified an impetus for emerging ethno-nationalist aspirations in the production of a vernacular literature and moral discourse through the translation of Christian scriptures.⁶ Using linguistic groups - like the Yoruba, the Kikuyu the Ganda and the Luba⁷ - that have been particularly successful in creating ethno-nationalism, these scholars argue that the content of

⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2nd ed, 1991), 37-46.

⁶ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 125.

⁷ Peel, *Religious Encounter*; Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping and the work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*, (Portsmouth, NH; 2005); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1997); David Maxwell, 'The creation of Lubaland: missionary science and Christian literacy in the making of the Luba Katanga in Belgian Congo' *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 10 . 3, 2016 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2016.1254923>.

the Bible is as influential as the production of a written vernacular, particularly Old Testament narratives of Israel as an archetypal nation.⁸ This article expands these arguments in two ways. First, it provides a study of relatively unsuccessful nationalist aspirations of the Toro to balance the studies of ethnic groups who gained political leverage through their development of an extensive corpus of literature and their nation-making. Thus it shows how Bible translation produced competing ethnic-nationalisms in which linguistic groups developed cohesive heritage and moral ideals in conflict with other groups but using the same intellectual resource. Second, it deviates from the familiar trend of taking an ethnic group as the main unit of analysis and, instead, examines the work and biography of one committed individual translator. The equation of Christian adherence with the production of ethno-national sensibilities is challenged by examining Kivebulaya's translations for peoples with less central positions in the colonial state and limited literature in the vernacular. This is not a straight-forward comparison of the way in which Nyoro, Toro and Mbuti received the translation - we have substantial evidence of the nature of the Runyoro-Rutoro reception but there is little evidence that the Mbuti translation was ever printed. The comparison is asymmetrical and is intended to show how revivalist and patriotic sensibilities were emerging from the early twentieth century and how - in the case of the Mbuti- translations had international agency.

Derek Peterson writing about the generation of East African Christians after Kivebulaya contrasts ethnic patriots and East African Revivalists who spoke the same languages but created different social worlds. Revivalists, Peterson says, 'were cosmopolitans learning a

⁸ Hastings, *Nationhood*, 18.

variety of tongues' whilst patriots 'promoted vernacular languages as a mark of ethnic solidarity', patriots promoted love amongst 'ethnic confreres' whilst revivalists worked for 'an international ecumene'.⁹ In a similar vein, David Maxwell claims that Luba evangelists were both cosmopolitan and patriotic: their impetus to spread Christianity, he says, 'was animated by contradictory tendencies.'¹⁰ As shall be evident, Kivebulaya's sensibilities were closest to the cosmopolitanism of the Revivalists and he had little interest in promoting his confreres. Like Revivalists, he learnt languages with the intention of overcoming difference. He translated the Bible into vernaculars to promote equal access to the community of Christian faithful. Ethnicity was for him 'a forum of argument' to which he did not conform.¹¹ In their commitment to vernacular translation as part of a transnational vision at a time when ethnic polities were emerging, Kivebulaya and his associates laid the ground for the dissent of the following generation of East African Revivalists discussed by Peterson.

The emergence of a transnational identity in translation processes is found in historical research that examines the linguistic and cultural work of Bible translation and the role of missionaries and converts in the construction of metropolitan knowledge of the colonies.¹²

The exercise of translation, it is argued by these studies, was a collaborative construction of

⁹ Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival, A History of Dissent, c.1935-1972* (Cambridge, 2012), p.6.

¹⁰ David Maxwell, 'The creation of Lubaland.'

¹¹ Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, p.3.

¹² Peggy Brock, Norman Etherington, Gareth Griffiths, Jacqueline Van Gent, *Indigenous Evangelists and Questions of Authority in the British Empire, 1750-1940: First Fruits*, (Leiden, 2015), 157-204.

language, narrative and values rather than a contribution to a 'colonisation of consciousness.'¹³ Following the impetus to draw metropole and colony into the same analytical field, missionary work has been studied as an encounter through which African contributions to global repositories of biological, geographical, ethnographical and medical knowledge.¹⁴ Missionaries learnt from Africans and disseminated Africans' knowledge to scientific communities. In Buganda, the collaborative research between Revd John Roscoe and Prime Minister Apolo Kagwa on their anthropological and historical works is a prominent example.¹⁵ Kivebulaya was a committed but relatively minor translator. He demonstrates the agency of Africans in starting translation projects and shows how far knowledge production through translation influenced formation of corporate identity, creating a community of faith larger than that of ethnicity or nation, which developed alongside cultural nationalist ambitions.¹⁶ Placing these distinct trajectories of historical enquiry side-by-side suggests that attention to the effects of Bible translation in sub-Saharan Africa aids an understanding that the 'creation and development of the modern world can be conceptualized as a "shared history," in which different cultures and societies shared a

¹³ John and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa, vol 1* (Chicago, 1991), 192-3.

¹⁴ Ann L Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,' in Stoler and Cooper (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), 1-56.

¹⁵ Benjamin Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship in Buganda*, (New York, 1991), 22-3, 27, 38-9.

¹⁶ Hastings, *Nationhood*, 195-7.

number of central experiences.¹⁷ It is the locally understood nature of this world culture which Kivebulaya propounded. In believing in New Testament constructions of communities that transcend ethnicity whilst acknowledging linguistic and cultural difference, missionaries – both African and European - attempted to form a culture that was ‘not only a homogenising force’ but one which ‘engenders and supports diversity and differentiation.’¹⁸ The collaboration between Africans and European missionaries facilitated knowledge production and cultural preservation and fostered international friendships. It aspired to form a worldwide Christian culture in which ‘foreign’ and ‘indigenous’ were meaningless categories. For some Africans – like Kivebulaya and the later Revivalists - it provided an alternative corporate identity to the cultural nationalist identity which has commanded the attention of scholars for so long.

UGANDA

Uganda’s political history was intimately connected with the development of vernacular language Bibles. Notions of nationhood in the kingdom of Buganda were being argued over by a rising Christian elite in the country, who developed a vernacular literature

¹⁷ Andreas Eckert, ‘Germany and Africa in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: An Entangled History?’ in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York, 2009), 226-246.

¹⁸ Hilde Nielssen, Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Karina Hestad Skeie, ‘Introduction’ in Nielssen, Okkenhaug and Skeie (eds), *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Unto the Ends of the World* (Leiden, 2011), 3.

as the translation of the Bible was being completed in Luganda.¹⁹ These political modernisers were men of letters, rewriting history to develop narratives of Christian progress. Their supporters developed a high regard for literacy and owned primers and portions of scripture as a sign of personal progress. Henry Wright Duta was preeminent among Ganda scholars in steering first Alexander MacKay and then George Pilkington of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to translating the entire Bible in Luganda by 1897. A Commentary on Matthew's Gospel by Ham Mukasa, Kivebulaya's patron, was published in 1900.²⁰ The Roman Catholic White Fathers also introduced literacy. They translated primers, catechisms, recounted Gospel stories and published Ganda legends. Their own high view of the Bible, however, prevented its access and interpretation by all converts.²¹ Ganda nationhood, in vision at least, expanded beyond ethno-linguistic borders, and from 1894 to 1907 there was some appetite to continue its pre-colonial territorial expansion in partnership with the British Protectorate.²² CMS missionaries and the Protestant Ganda who rose to power as a result of the Civil Wars in Buganda, 1888 -1893, had advocated for British

¹⁹ See for example, Apolo Kagwa note 13; Ham Mukasa, *Simuda Nyuma* (London, 1938) and B Musoke Zimbe, *Buganda ne Kabaka* (Mengo, 1939).

²⁰ Mukasa, *Ekitabu Ekitegeza Enjiri ya Matayo* (Mengo, 1900).

²¹ The White Fathers socialised converts at the central mission stations into an *ecclesia* of fellow believers who together entered the rhythms of Christian life, but the role of this form of conversion falls outside the remit of this article, see Darius Magunda, 'The Role and Impact of the White Fathers in Planting the Church in Western Uganda 1879-1969,' PhD, 2006 Pontificia Università della Santa Croce.

²² See Andrew Roberts, 'The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda,' *The Journal of African History*, no. 3 (1962), 435–50; G N Uzoigwe, 'Bunyoro-Kitara Revisited: A Re-evaluation of the Decline and Diminishment of an African Kingdom,' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 48,1 (2013), 16-34, doi.10.1177/0021909611432094.

involvement and used the vehicles of the Protectorate to extend Ganda and Christian influence into the kingdoms of the west. The gospel preaching and literacy teaching of many Ganda evangelists of surrounding kingdoms has been understood, to a greater or lesser extent, to have been propelled by Ganda imperialist ambitions in partnership with British colonial and missionary interests.²³ The title of an article written by Bishop Tucker illustrates these expansionist expectations. Tucker's 'Narrative of a Journey to Toro' was sub-titled 'The Spiritual Expansion of Buganda.'²⁴ The Ganda became the pre-eminently influential people in the Protectorate, but the polities around them developed similar skills and sensibilities and used them to improve their position in the colony. Toro had allied with the Ganda and the British in the 1890s to maintain its independence from Bunyoro and Toro's ruler, *Mukama* Kasagama, owed the Ganda his position. Toro interest in Christianity had initially been part of their appreciation of the political structure and culture of the Ganda. However, by the early 1900s, the political ambitions of the Ganda were also perceived to be intrusive in Toro. Ganda traders, chiefs and evangelists in the area were eased from positions of influence, although Kivebulaya's ordination in 1903 was endorsed by the Toro Church Council. Buganda-Bunyoro relations were more fraught. Raids and battles between the kingdoms had been a common feature of pre-colonial relations. In 1899, the British captured and exiled Kabarega, the ruler of Bunyoro, who they had defeated in a series of battles from 1893. They annexed the 'lost counties' of Bugangaizi and Buyaga to Buganda and deployed Ganda as chiefs in the subjugated kingdom. From 1902 Nyoro discontent increased when the prominent Protestant Ganda chief, James Miti, forced the deposition of

²³ Pirouet, *Black Evangelists: The Spread of Christianity in Uganda 1891-1914* (London, 1978), 190-195.

²⁴ CMS *Intelligencier*, August 1899, 29-35 and 101-111.

Mukama Kitakimbwa and appointed Kitakimbwa's more compliant brother, Andereya Duhaga II.

Literacy and Bible translation played a key role in relations between the Toro and Nyoro and between these two kingdoms and that of the Ganda. The missionary scholar Adrian Hastings regrets the groundswell of ethnic pride and the missionary response of translation which prevented Luganda becoming the *lingua franca* of the country. 'Evangelically' he says, translation into the 'heart language' was 'undoubtedly the right decision; politically, however, it prevented closely related societies from being merged within a "Greater Buganda" and instead hardened the lines between a series of petty societies.'²⁵ In saying so, Hastings reformulated ideas that were current in the Nyoro debate (discussed below), some eighty years before he wrote. Competing forms of cultural nationalism challenged the cohesiveness of Uganda and caused internal competition within the state when its position would have been strengthened by possessing a single cohesive *lingua franca*. The debates – as will become evident – took place between Africans and between CMS missionaries.

KIVEBULAYA'S COSMOPOLITANISM

Apolo Kivebulaya was a product of the political ferment of the Ganda kingdom and its regional and international connections. Brought up in Singo province on the Buganda-Bunyoro border, an area of fluid regional identities and political alliances, he moved towards the Buganda capital about 1884 where he learnt to read and was baptised. He was one of a number of evangelists who, from 1894 onwards, were sent to the Kingdom of Toro

²⁵ Hastings, *Nationhood*, 157.

by the Mengo Church Council, the Native Anglican Church's governing body, which included Kagwa, Mukasa and other prominent Ganda chiefs. Yet his cosmopolitan vision of a Christian economy, forged in early reading classes, became increasingly at odds with the ambitions of a political elite who developed a sense of ethnic pride and conservation. Kivebulaya's commitment to Bible translation demonstrates his linguistically-plural perception of a worldwide Christian culture, a perception he shared over almost thirty years with the villages of Toro and Ituri and a generation of younger evangelists who came under his tutelage. It is this cosmopolitan vision that provides a critique to forms of cultural nationalism that created from ethno-linguistic distinctions first-order issues for identity.

Kivebulaya engaged in early orthographical work, the writing of a primer and the first attempts at gospel translation in Runyoro-Rutoro from 1895, and for the Mbuti language in the 1920s. He also lent support to other translations. In 1900, the Runyoro-Rutoro translation of St Matthew's Gospel was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. In the same year, Kivebulaya, provided the first recorded petition for the entire Bible to be translated into Runyoro-Rutoro in a letter he wrote to the CMS secretaries in London, his 'fellow missionaries'.²⁶ HE Maddox, the CMS translator, was not yet convinced by Kivebulaya's argument: he argued that 'Christian maturity' was required before 'the historical development of the two testaments' could be understood and properly interpreted, so converts would not emulate the polygamy or violent warfare among nations

²⁶ Church Missionary Society Archives, University of Birmingham (CMSA) G3 A7 O 1901/101, 9 Sept 1900 Apolo Kivebulaya to CMS, London, translated by George Mpanga.

described in the Old Testament.²⁷ When Maddox was eventually persuaded to undertake the project, he translated the historical books of the Old Testament last.²⁸ Nevertheless, Maddox enabled Kivebulaya to make his own appeal by translating his petitionary letter from Luganda to English.²⁹ In writing directly to London, Kivebulaya attempted to circumvent the opposition of Mengo Church Council and the current CMS policy in Uganda to promote Luganda and only translate portions of Scripture in other languages. He propounded a straight-forward Protestant Biblicentrist view, unencumbered by other considerations. Bibliocentrism refers to the conviction that everyone should have access to Scripture in their 'heart language' because the Bible, regarded as the Word of God, is not only the primary religious authority but also an agent in conversion – a view best articulated by the British and Foreign Bible Society that supported both translations discussed here. Vernacular translation was, therefore, a religious imperative. It was a vital element in the conversion and instruction of individuals and thus a foundation for creating a godly community, the church. In the letter to the CMS, Kivebulaya, using his own experience of trying to read the Bible in Swahili before it was available in Luganda, explained that literacy in one's own language was easier to achieve and was necessary for proper spiritual engagement. In 1901 Kivebulaya's argument was supported by some CMS missionaries who considered that CMS policy-makers were overly concerned about the specialised and time -

²⁷ Bible Society Archives, University of Cambridge (BSA) E3.7.3.6, Nyoro records, 31 August 1907, 5.

²⁸ BSA E3.7.3.6, Nyoro records, 31 August 1907, 6.

²⁹ CMSA G3 A7 O 1901/101, 8 Sept 1900 HE Maddox, to Mr Fox and the Secretaries, CMS, London.

consuming nature of the work, and engrossed in debates over Luganda as a vehicle state and ecclesiastical unity, rather than attending to the needs of ordinary converts.³⁰

New Testament literature inspired African Christians with notions of worldwide mission, in which Christian belonging is considered to transcend national boundaries. Mukasa's interpretation of Matthew's Gospel grafted its readers into wider Christian tradition by providing examples from church history. Reading and discussing the Bible opened wide vistas of geography and history to be owned by converts. Kivebulaya appears to have followed this particular interpretive lead promoted vernacular translation so that all peoples could be part of a global Christian community his identified in biblical passages.

Kivebulaya shared the international missionary ideal of Matthew 28:19: 'Go to all nations (*ethnos*) and make them my disciples' that was rooted in the comprehension of the unity of human nature (Acts 17. 26) and the belief that all people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). He considered it part of his missionary vocation to evangelise extensively and to pray for the world (*munsi*) and peoples (*abantu*) and nations (*bamawanga*) so they would inherit the Kingdom of God, locally accessible through small vernacular bible-reading congregations.³¹ Kivebulaya was praised by the Mengo Church Council for carrying out Matthew's 'Great Commission' when his decision to work more permanently in

³⁰ CMSA G3 A7 O 1901 211, Albert Cook, 'The Future of the Language of Bunyoro', 1901 (off-cut, publication unknown). CMSA G3 A7 O 1901 219, A B Lloyd letter to Baylis, CMS, 2 Sept 1901.

³¹ Africana Section, Makerere University (MAK), Kivebulaya diaries (multiple entries).

Ituri from 1916 became known to them.³² On meeting a diviner he claimed the Bible as his divining tool and read John 3:16, a passage beloved by evangelicals throughout the world, which says that God's love for the whole world provides universal access to eternal life through belief in Jesus.³³ In 1900 he took two missionaries, recently arrived in Toro, to meet some of the peoples for whom he prayed. One reflected that Toro is 'God's country, God's territory... a King who reigneth in Africa as in England,' as she noted the importance of learning languages in order to know African peoples.³⁴ A consciousness of linguistic pluralism was accompanied by a belief in human unity through conversion to Jesus Christ. Kivebulaya's bibliocentricism was evident in his enactment of biblical passages. He paralleled his own itinerations with the missionary journeys of St Paul, sought guidance on running of churches from the epistles, and expected the Holy Spirit to work through native tongues.³⁵ Other evangelists operating in the Great Lakes admired Kivebulaya for his success in relinquishing custom and kin.³⁶ Aberi Balya, a member of the Runyoro-Rutoro translation team, noted, '[Kivebulaya] was a Christian. He had no clan of his own only called himself a Christian. He did not select people but loved all Christians. He was gifted in changing people to be Christians.'³⁷ Kivebulaya and his colleagues promoted Christianity as the primary identity and the Kingdom of God as a universal spiritual polity.³⁸

³² MAK, Letter from B M Zimbe, Clerk to Council, 16 January 1918, in Apolo Kivebulaya's diaries (black book).

³³ Emma Wild-Wood, 'Powerful Words: Reading the Diary of a Ganda Priest,' *Studies in World Christianity*, 18:2, 2012. 138, 143-4.

³⁴ Ruth B Fisher, *On the Borders of Pigmy Land* (London, 1905), 35 and 110.

³⁵ Wild-Wood, 'Powerful Words,' 143, 150.

³⁶ MAK, Reuben Kabonge, 'Account of Canon Apolo Kivebulaya,' unpublished ms, trans Alice A Sebiguju, p.4.

³⁷ MAK, Aberi Balya, 'Account of Apolo Kivebulaya' unpublished ms.

Petitions by Kivebulaya and others enabled the translation to proceed with the translations of the New Testament. The official team comprised of Maddox, Balya, Yosiya Kamuhiigi, and Zac Musana. However, in 1903 the work of translation involved a much larger group of people with no specialist language training, including a number of Toro chiefs, a missionary nurse, a girls' school teacher and Kivebulaya, who met to discuss a text after the day's activities had ended.³⁹ These evenings aided the development of collegiate relationships through regular and sympathetic discussion on the process of comprehending the biblical passage, presumably in Luganda and English, and searching for an approximation in Runyoro-Rutoro. An abridged version of the Book of Common Prayer, used in daily corporate prayer, and teaching materials for the popular schools developing at the Kabarole mission station were also translated.

Kivebulaya was originally influential at the Toro court and his bibliocentric views were appealing to the ruler, *Mukama* Kasagama (c. 1870 -1928), who also found initial inspiration in the Bible's cosmopolitan outlook and, increasingly, in its narratives of nationhood.⁴⁰ In 1896 Kasagama was baptised and took the name Daudi after the Old Testament King who restored the fortunes of Israel when the country was threatened by its neighbours. Kasagama renamed his capital Bethlehemu, after the biblical town where

³⁸ See Pirouet, *Black Evangelists*, especially chapters 2 and 3. Also Ruth Fisher, *Twilight Tales of the Black Baganda* (London [1911] 1970), 180-1, who states Christianity gave lasting peace but 'did not offer any temporal blessings.'

³⁹ CMSA Z38, Round robin letter no.17 from A. E. Allen, 3 March 1903.

⁴⁰ Georges Le Blond, *Le Père August Achte des Missionnaires d'Afrique*, Paris, 1928 (2nd ed) 192.

David (and Jesus) were born. In the same way, the Ganda had used '*kabaka*,' the Runyoro-Rutoro word adopted for the kings of the Old Testament, and the 'King of Kings,' the creator God, who they were required to obey was that used for their pre-eminent ruler, '*omukama*'.⁴¹ In April 1897 the Toro Bethlehemu gained its own river Jordan when, with the approval of Kasagama, fourteen people were baptised by crossing from one bank of the Mpanga River to the bank just below the palace. New converts placed themselves into biblical stories of baptism whilst biblical sites were created in Toro in close proximity to political power.⁴² In 1897 Kasagama wrote to the CMS in apostolic tones, addressing his letter to the 'Elders of the Church in Europe' and telling them 'God our Father gave me the Kingdom of Toro to reign over for Him'. He ends his letter, 'we are all One in Christ Jesus our Saviour... I am your friend who loves you in Jesus'.⁴³ The establishment of a Christian Toro nation was an international endeavour in Kasagama's eyes, in which his Christian friends with whom he was united in faith, would be glad to assist. He wished to create a strong centralised kingdom from a collection of smaller political entities, some of which had little desire for his rule.⁴⁴ In the first years of his reign Kasagama was assiduous in his attempts to use Protestant moral codes and biblical narratives to influence societal cohesion. As far as possible, Kasagama elected chiefs who supported his view. The fervour for literacy which gripped Kasagama and his court at Kabarole, became an opportunity to learn about a

⁴¹ God became *Ruhanga* in Runyoro-Rutoro and *Katonda* in Luganda, both names for local deities associated with the creation of the world.

⁴² John Callis quoted in *The Annual Report – Ninety-Ninth Year*, London, CMS, 1898; p.141.

⁴³ Letter to CMS, Feb 1st 1897, translated by A B Lloyd and quoted in *The Annual Report – Ninety-Ninth Year*, London, CMS, 1898; p.140-141.

⁴⁴ Edward I Steinhart, *Conflict and Collaboration in the Kingdoms of Western Uganda*, Kampala, Fountain, 1999, p.47.

particular model of corporate identity. Old Testament interpretations that placed Israel at the centre of God's divine plan as 'a "Holy People," divinely chosen but enduring all the ups and downs of a confusing history' offered an ideal of nationhood.⁴⁵ The theological notions of kingship and nation, which Hastings identifies as influencing medieval Europe, also provided ideas for the kingdoms of Uganda.

The call for the translations of the whole Bible – springing originally from Kivebulaya's cosmopolitan perspective - became a spiritual and political focus of the ruling elite of Toro in their attempt to maintain their own purchase on power within the colonial state.⁴⁶ Bible translation engendered for Kivebulaya an interest in transnational collaboration and notions of belonging but even the interpretations that inspired him could take others in a different hermeneutical direction. Mukasa's commentary on Matthew, for example, uses Ganda proverbs and customs to explain its message. Communication in familiar idioms became a form of domestication, which was increasingly evident in the writings of political elites.⁴⁷ For the Toro and the Nyoro debates about translation became enmeshed in political considerations within the British Protectorate and the Ganda polity. The discussion below of the 1907 protest against years of British-Ganda allied intrusion into Bunyoro known as the Nyangire Uprising allows an examination of Bible translation as a site of competition when the formation of political corporate identities collided. This development was at odds with Kivebulaya's missionary readings of expectations of

⁴⁵ Hastings, *Nationhood*, 197.

⁴⁶ The kingdom of Ankole was also affected but is not part of this paper.

⁴⁷ Mukasa's Introduction to *Simuda Numa* (1939), shows how in later thought he also grafted Christianity into Ganda tradition.

borderless, multi-lingual communities which saw Christianity as supra-national in essence. Kivebulaya had become a catalyst for a project of little interest to him.

RUNYORO BIBLE TRANSLATION

Arguments about the Runyoro-Rutoro translation provide a nexus of interlocking issues in a particular politics of place: the formation of Protestant identity, the alteration of mission policy, and the assertion of nationalist claims in a competitive environment where the colonial centralisation of power was contested. To adapt Peel's phrase about the Yoruba in Nigeria, 'what it has meant to be [Ugandan], to be [a Nyoro speaker] and what it has meant to be Christian have evolved in continuous interaction with one another.'⁴⁸ The connection between the political and the spiritual can be seen in the events surrounding the Nyangire uprising of March to May 1907. One of the demands of the Nyoro was that the Old Testament as well as the New Testament be translated into Runyoro-Rutoro.⁴⁹ The alteration of the CMS policy which resulted in the translation and publication of the Old Testament by 1912 has long been acknowledged as has the role of competing nationalisms in this decision.⁵⁰ The influence of translation in the formation of alliances and corporate identity has been less well observed.

⁴⁸ Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 279.

⁴⁹ Holger Hansen, *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting, Uganda 1890-1925* (New York, 1984), 380-395.

⁵⁰ Published by the British and Foreign Bible Society who had also published the Gospels. BSA, Es/3/454 Nyoro-Nkore, Letter from H.E. Maddox to R. Kilgour, 15 Apr. 1913. SPCK had published *An Elementary Lunyoro Grammar* by Maddox in 1902.

The uprising began early in 1907 when Nyoro chiefs and sub-chiefs began evicting Ganda from their positions, and culminated in a largely peaceful and well-organised protest in Hoima in May 1907. The British and Ganda forces retaliated in a manner generally regarded as disproportionate to its damage or threat.⁵¹ Among fifty-four men arrested were two members of the Bunyoro Church Council and, in the words of AB Fisher, CMS missionary in Hoima, 'some of our best Xtian (sic) men.'⁵² They included Paulo Byabacwezi (d.1912) the senior chief of Bugahya who funded the construction of Hoima church, and Daudi Bitatule (1884 -1963) a sub-chief.⁵³ Fisher, himself, supported Ganda rule. Shane Doyle considers that Fisher's failure to acknowledge the legitimacy of Nyoro claims adversely affected the growth of the mission in Bunyoro.⁵⁴ As shall be demonstrated, however, Fisher represented only one side of an argument within the CMS in Uganda. Equally significant is the division of opinion amongst his missionary colleagues which may have influenced the continued support of the church by Byabacwezi and Bitatule.

The uprising was the culmination of local organisation and of regional diplomacy. Nyoro leaders had sent envoys to Toro, Ankole, Busoga and the lost counties to form an alliance of peoples who were disenchanted by relationships with the Ganda. The relationship with Toro was particularly significant because they shared the same language

⁵¹ See Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro* (Nairobi, 2006), 96-101; Edward I Steinhart, *Conflict and Collaboration in The Kingdoms of Western Uganda* (2nd ed. Kampala, 1999), 239-54.

⁵² CMSA, G3 A 70, letter from A B Fisher to A Tucker, 20 May 1907.

⁵³ M Louise Pirouet, 'The Expansion of the Church of Uganda (NAC) from Buganda into Northern and Western Uganda Between 1891 and 1914 with Special Reference to the work of African Leaders and Evangelists,' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of East Africa, 1968), 376-377.

⁵⁴ Doyle, *Crisis and Decline*, 100-101.

although the two kingdoms had had a conflictual relationship since Toro had ceded from Bunyoro in the 1830s. A B Fisher connected Nyoro belligerence with their alliance with the Toro and a desire for further work on a Runyoro-Rutoro Bible. In a letter to Bishop Tucker, giving details of the uprising, Fisher writes,

I regret to say that the first that was heard of an anti-Buganda feeling here was when the Batoro sent emissaries and a lot of correspondence to these chiefs last autumn, begging the Banyoro to demand the Bible in their own language.⁵⁵

The fact that possession of the entire Bible in Runyoro-Rutoro became a focus of demands, can be understood as the instrumentalisation of the Bible for cultural cohesion and communication with allies intent on greater autonomy within the colonial state. The Bible was doubly useful because it had cultural currency among their antagonists. The ability to read it was considered a sign of civilisation among the Ganda and the British. Thus it became a symbol of cultural equality with Ganda and a sign that other polities could be also regarded as African kingdoms. The Bible's agency, however, in developing nationalist aspirations is to be found in the commitment to the contents of the biblical texts themselves, as demonstrated by Kasagama.

Communication between Toro and Nyoro chiefs developed after the publication of the Nyoro New Testament in 1904.⁵⁶ The Toro Church Council meeting at Christmas 1905 galvanised further contact with the Nyoro. Maddox read to the meeting a private letter from Fisher which argued that Luganda be the *lingua franca* for the Native Anglican Church

⁵⁵ CMS A G3 A 7 0, Fisher to Tucker, 26 May 1907.

⁵⁶ H E Maddox, 19 Nov. 1904, *Annual Letters* (London, 1905), 257.

affairs. The council transmitted the news swiftly to the Nyoro chiefs.⁵⁷ Maddox's decision to make public Fisher's point of view was no doubt considered underhand by CMS colleagues. In this instance, however, Maddox's priority was whole Bible translation (of which he was now convinced) and his primary loyalty lay with the Toro as their missionary-translator and not with his fellow British missionary. In November 1906, there was a further meeting called by Kasagama and held in the home of G R Blackledge. About 150 'chiefs and leading Christians' gathered to petition Bishop Tucker and the CMS Translation Committee for the whole Bible in Runyoro-Rutoro. Blackledge was persuaded by their ardent arguments that the whole Bible should be accessible in their own language.⁵⁸ Cultural sympathies and alliances among those with a shared language and history were re-activated through vernacular translation.⁵⁹ However, the Toro and Nyoro elites, having achieved governance wished to maintain their political distinctiveness within the colonial state: performing biblical kingship also prevented the kind of closer political or ethnic unity that had developed among the Yoruba and Kikuyu. The two kingdoms remained distinct polities unable or unwilling to unite further against the Ganda or to meld themselves to her influence. Through the acquisition of literacy and via the process of Christian conversion, these elites attempted to maintain what they construed as traditional power. Arguably what

⁵⁷ Steinhart, *Conflict and Collaboration*, 245

⁵⁸ G R Blackledge, 16 Nov. 1907, *Annual Letters* (London, 1908), 229.

⁵⁹ Unlike discussions surrounding other translations at the time, concerns about regional variants of the languages, whilst not entirely absent, appear to be secondary to the unitary capacity of the texts. See for example, 'GOM Tasié 'Igbo Bible Wso and the Evolution of the "Union Igbo" 1905-1913, in Shed Adiele (ed) *The Niger Mission, Origin, Growth and Impact, 1837-1995* (Aba, 1996), 80-97.

they actually achieved was what John Lonsdale calls 'ethnic patriotism,' a respect for rights of 'household heads'.⁶⁰

The resistance by Fisher, the Ganda Protestant chiefs and others to a whole Bible in Runyoro–Rutoro also stemmed from a recognition of the power of language and biblical narrative to unify. For many European missionaries, the comprehension of *ethnos* was overlaid with notions of European nation-states, themselves influenced by Judeo-Christian concepts of political articulations of moral community. Whereas Kivebulaya subscribed to a view of the Church as able to transcend national boundaries, Fisher and others emphasised the role of the Church in uniting a nation. They propounded a hegemonic form of unity in which church and state operated in tandem. The impetus towards vernacular translation was often tempered by a concern for its apparent role in division. They regarded the cohesion of the colonial nation-state as more valuable than smaller units of corporate identity and they assumed that greater unity could be achieved if the Christianisation of the Nyoro took place within the Luganda medium. Prominent individuals on the Mengo Church Council were wary of the self-determination of other peoples whose cooperation was considered necessary to Ganda influence for a cohesive colonial state.⁶¹ The belief of most CMS missionaries that, whatever its ills, colonialism assured stability through the introduction of larger geographical areas of governance, was intertwined with theological concerns about ecclesiastical unity.⁶² F Rowling, the senior Luganda translator for the CMS

⁶⁰ John M Lonsdale, 'Anti-colonial nationalism and patriotism in Sub-Saharan Africa' in John Breiully (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (OUP, Oxford, 2013), 319.

⁶¹ Pirouet, *Black Evangelists*, 59.

⁶² CMSA G3 A 7 0, AB Fisher to A Tucker, 26 May 1907.

identified the superiority of Luganda and the Ganda as conductors of Christianity to other parts of the protectorate. Assuming a hierarchy of languages, he considered that proper teaching should be carried out in a 'superior' language which becomes the national *lingua franca*. He also focused on unity to carry his argument and appeals to a colonial ideal, 'The true imperial idea is unity, both in the Church and in Civic life, and the more that is promoted by a common language the stronger will both the Church and the country become.'⁶³ Arguments for the prominence of the Luganda Bible, Ganda and British influence were supported by ecclesiological ideas familiar to Protestants in sixteenth century England, and at a time when the close association between church and state had become a point of debate in England.⁶⁴ One may also speculate that Fisher, a proud Irish Protestant, brought some of his native political assumptions of unionism to bear.⁶⁵ A number of CMS missionaries considered that the Protectorate could be a cohesive nation-state and a Christian state only through the use of the language and customs of governance of the Ganda. Hastings' arguments in the 1990s for the prominence of Luganda were current in 1907. In 1930, it was still assumed that Luganda would 'assimilate' the language groups around it.⁶⁶

For the Toro, meanwhile, the arguments about Bible translation were more than a device to gain cultural leverage. The theological engagement with the text by *Mukama*

⁶³ CMSA G3A 7 0, F Rowling, 'The Luganda Language' 1907. Rowling was the main Ganda translator for CMS.

⁶⁴ David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), 13,15, 149-150.

⁶⁵ Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture*, 83-86.

⁶⁶ Karl Roehl, 'The Linguistic Situation in East Africa,' *Africa* 3:2 (1930), 191-202.

Kasagama and the chiefs informed the creation of emerging elites and their political arguments. The Nyangire uprising represents a tipping point, after which Kasagama shifted his strategy of Christianisation. This was epitomised by one event. On 16th August 1908, Kasagama held his first *empango*, a traditional biennial ceremony to commemorate the accession of a *mukama*, to demonstrate largesse and accept tribute offered as an assurance of fealty. Revd Blackledge placed a traditional crown upon Kasagama in a church service, a sign of accepting the authority of the Christian God. Kasagama, having attempted to establish his claim to rule Toro and bring stability to the region through the introduction of a religious system which demanded significant change to personal and social behaviour, now performed a revival of tradition, reinterpreting a familiar ceremony with Christian rites.

The *empango* gained patriotic traction during the reign of Kasagama's son and heir. George Rukidi (1928 -1965) explained the value of the *empango* in his history of the Kingdom as an event in which 'old things were done as in the times of the old kings,'⁶⁷ and in the narrative he invokes the stories of the Old Testament to demonstrate the wisdom of obedience to kings.⁶⁸ Theologically inflected notions of nation, kingship and unity shaped cultural nationalism in Western Uganda and provided momentum for a common cause which was to continue to appeal during the nationalist debates surrounding the political independence of Uganda.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF MBUTI BIBLE TRANSLATION

⁶⁷ Rukidi, p.80.

⁶⁸ George Rukidi, *Okuhwaho Kw'Obukama bwa' Toro*, trans. Consolata Amoti Rubale, 'The End of the Toro Kingdom,' n.d. ms. p.79-80.

The second translation project instigated by Kivebulaya demonstrates how his commitment to bibliocentrism and vernacular translation was motivated by an expectation of an unbounded Christian community. It also demonstrates the role of translation in an accumulation of scientific knowledge of value to the metropole and to many Africans in their identity construction. It concerns Kivebulaya's partial and largely unsuccessful attempt to translate the Bible in the language of the Mbuti. As will become evident, the historical evidence reveals little about the identity formation of the Mbuti themselves. The 'cultural flexibility' of the Mbuti and other foragers identified by contemporary anthropologists includes a lack of centralized authority, close relationships with farming neighbours, and their marginalisation within the colonial state, all make the ethno-nationalist claims – like those of the Toro and Banyoro - highly unlikely.⁶⁹ Kivebulaya's attempts to replicate his Runyoro-Rutoro translation work by producing a primer and Gospel of Mark in the Mbuti language had quite different ramifications for the *politics* of identity for the Mbuti, re-examined as it was through transnational linguistic and ethnographic networks.⁷⁰ This vernacular translation raises questions about identity resulting from international linguistic work. It also highlights the sense of transnational belonging of Christian translators, like Kivebulaya, and the way in which translation work was facilitated through international networks of church and mission.

⁶⁹ Susan Kent (ed) *Cultural Diversity Among Twentieth-Century Foragers: An African Perspective* (Cambridge, 1996), 12-14.

⁷⁰ Serge Bahuchet, 'L'Invention des Pygmées,' *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 33, 129 (1993), p.153-181.

While Protestant elites of Toro settled down to the business of maintaining their hold on the kingdom and providing an account of themselves in the colonial-state through reworking biblical and Toro kingly traditions, Kivebulaya continued his long itinerations. He spent the last seventeen years of his life in the Mboga area on the western Semeliki escarpment Congo, preaching and planting churches among Giti, Lese, Konjo and Mbuti, as well as the Nyoro speakers of Mboga (Hema).⁷¹ By 1921 he had inspired young people in the Mboga school to join him on his journeys, creating a band of devoted followers.⁷² They preached that God loved all, Christ died for all and gives life to all.⁷³ Kivebulaya became internationally renowned for his familiarity with the Mbuti. The Mbuti had a particular place in the imagination of Ugandans and European missionaries: their hunter-gatherer life-style and distinctive diminutive stature rendered them curious, supposedly primitive, and challenging to reach. AB Lloyd, Kivebulaya's first biographer, described Kivebulaya's journeys in 'pygmy and cannibal country'. For Lloyd, the exotic appeal of the Mbuti drew attention and, potentially, funds to mission work. Kivebulaya's diary suggests he developed a fondness for the Mbuti and a curiosity about their way of life. Young evangelists and the first Mbuti converts helped him to prepare a primer and translate the Bible.⁷⁴

Kivebulaya replicated the policy he articulated in the 1900 letter to CMS for a politically marginalised group but one considered ethnographically exotic. On 6 September 1930,

⁷¹ Emma Wild-Wood, *Migration and Christian Identity in Congo (DRC)*, (Leiden, 2008), 26.

⁷² Diary, June 11 1921 and Basimasi Kyakuhaire (f), early catechist, interview Komanda, 21 September 2000.

⁷³ Diary, October 1921.

⁷⁴ A B Lloyd, *Apolo the Pathfinder: Who Follows?* London, CMS, 1934, p.34-37.

Kivebulaya wrote to inform the Editorial Superintendent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, Revd Robert Kilgour, that, following the publication by the Religious Tract Society of a primer in 1926, he had completed St Mark's Gospel in 'Lumbuti'.⁷⁵ His letter is written in response to one from Kilgour that encouraged Kivebulaya in his endeavours and articulated to him the Bible Society's conviction that, 'The Christian Church cannot grow except on the foundations of the Scriptures in the mother tongue. This is one of the strongest foundations not only for advance but for the teaching of the young Church.' The urgency with which Kilgour pressed Kivebulaya to complete the gospel demonstrates his conviction of the importance of the task and the identification of Kivebulaya's role as indispensable: 'it really is worth while to lay aside other work,'⁷⁶ exhorted Kilgour, with a conviction that CMS missionaries often failed to muster. The Bible Society provided portions or complete translations of the Bible and their operatives believed in a pure form of bibliocentrism, the power of the text alone to convert readers. The issues of ecclesial or political unity which exercised Anglican missionaries in Uganda were of much less concern to the multi-denominational Bible Society.

Kivebulaya's manuscript was retrieved from Mboga by AB Lloyd only after Kivebulaya's death in 1933 and given to the Bible Society's new editorial superintendent, Edwin Smith, the renowned anthropologist of African religions.⁷⁷ Bible Society policy insisted that all translations should be checked before publication and, since Smith was unable to find anyone with the knowledge of the language, he undertook the work himself.

⁷⁵ BSA E3 3 629 file5c A Kivebulaya to R Kigour, 6 Sept 1930.

⁷⁶ BSA E3 3 629 file5c. R Kigour to A Kivebulaya, 13 March 1930.

⁷⁷ BSA E3 3 629file5c, 3, AB Lloyd to R Kilgour.

From Kivebulaya's manuscript he produced on 7 September 1938 a 'tentative' Grammar and Dictionary, with a lengthy introduction, and an article for the *Journal of the Royal African Society* in which Smith expresses both the palpable excitement of the ethnographer and the enthusiasm of the missionary.⁷⁸ He also demonstrates the craft of the linguist by carefully enumerating the challenges he faced in making sense of Kivebulaya's manuscript and the notes supplied by an assistant from Mboga, identifying the language group, reducing the text to norms of written language, acknowledging the divergent theories in the field, and engaging with other scholars.⁷⁹ Before receiving the manuscript Smith had sent a copy of Kivebulaya's primer to SVD missionary anthropologist and sometime editor of *Anthropos*, Father Paul Schebesta.⁸⁰ Smith attended Schebesta's presentation on the pygmies at the 'Congress in Paris' in 1932.⁸¹ Smith consulted the well-known linguist at SOAS, A N Tucker, before concluding that the language was related to the Logo-Meru-Madi group. In collaboration with these two scholars Smith facilitated the puncturing of contemporary common assumptions of Mbuti inferiority. The Mbuti, they concluded, were *homo sapiens* and not an ancient subspecies or degenerate version of humanity.⁸² Smith and Tucker asserted that, far from the Mbuti learning the language of their neighbours, they possessed a sophisticated language of their own which was adopted by the Lese and Mbuba farming

⁷⁸ BSA F3 Smith 1, 'Efe Grammar and Dictionary', unpublished; 'The language of Pygmies of the Ituri' *Journal of the Royal African Society* vol 37, no. 149, 1938 (464-470).

⁷⁹ BSA F3 Smith 1 Introduction to 'Efe Grammar and Dictionary' See especially, p.7-21.

⁸⁰ According to Smith, Schebesta tried unsuccessfully to meet Kivebulaya in the Ituri forest in 1931. BSA F3 Smith 1 'Introduction,' p.18.

⁸¹ 'Paul Schebesta, SVD' <http://www.anthropos.eu/anthropos/heritage/schebesta.php> (accessed 7 April 2017).

⁸² See debates explored in Bahuchet, 'L'Invention des Pygmées,' p.153-181.

peoples with whom they traded. Smith also knew Lloyd's first biographies of Kivebulaya, which claim that the Mbuti were 'maligned' by those, like HM Stanley, who described them as 'treacherous and vicious'.⁸³ Smith's thorough and careful work makes of Kivebulaya's contact with the Mbuti and his 'Lumbuti' translation a tool in the production of ethnographic knowledge and in the politics of racial hierarchy, providing evidence for a new scholarly narrative on pygmies.

The primary purpose of Smith's work was to facilitate the evangelisation of the Mbuti. He was also eager to have the translation published 'as a memorial to the translator', who he described as 'a very gallant Christian gentleman', an 'heroic saint' and 'an African for whom I cherish a deep admiration'.⁸⁴ The correspondence from 1928 surrounding Kivebulaya's translation in the Bible Society archives expresses heady excitement about the initiative of a 'native' Christian to translate a language of a people perceived to be particularly exotic. Kivebulaya met the gold standard of vernacular Bible translation as perpetuated by the Bible Society: providing a biblical text to those who appeared most marginalised and thus allowing them an opportunity to join the Christian church. W J W Roome, the Bible Society's representative in East Africa, also wrote a biography of Kivebulaya for children, *Apolo, Apostle to the Pygmies* (1934) which relies heavily on Lloyd's work and is indebted to Paul Schebesta and his book *Among Congo Pygmies*.⁸⁵ A network of missionary-oriented individuals promoted the Mbuti as human beings with their own

⁸³ A B Lloyd, *More About Apolo*, (London, 1929), 31.

⁸⁴ Grammar and Dictionary, 4, 1 and 39 respectively.

⁸⁵ Translated from the German by Gerald Griffin (London, 1933).

language and culture, in order that the Mbuti could become part of a different culture, a Christian world culture.

The impulses for vernacular translation that propelled Kivebulaya to plead for the entire Bible in Nyoro remained with him thirty years later. Indeed, it seems likely that he used the Nyoro Bible, not the Luganda one, as his 'original' text, from which he translated the Mbuti.⁸⁶ His earlier conviction of the importance of the Nyoro translation permitted him to work with Nyoro speakers (among them some Mbuti) on the Mbuti translation. Without it, it is unlikely that he could have successfully organised a translation team; few Ganda knew the Mbuti language. Furthermore, few of the Nyoro speakers in Mboga, who collaborated with Kivebulaya on the translation, would have done so without the conviction that God '...hath made of one blood all nations... that they should seek the Lord.' The people of Mboga more often disparaged the Mbuti.

Smith's grammar and dictionary of what he designated the Mbuti's 'Efe' language was intended to be sent to north-east Congo to aid further research. As far as I am aware, the work did not take place, the Efe-language gospel was never published and it remains little more than an ethnographic footnote in the history of Bible translation. However, there were about fifty baptised Mbuti before Kivebulaya's death and a number were baptised immediately after his death who all took the name 'Apolo'.⁸⁷ There are Mbuti Christian congregations today who trace their origins to Kivebulaya's evangelism but they currently

⁸⁶ 'Grammar and Dictionary,' 4.

⁸⁷ Lloyd, *Apolo the Pathfinder*, p.34 & 36.

use the Swahili texts widely available in Ituri.⁸⁸ The available historical evidence for the influence of this second translation does not tell us how the Mbuti saw themselves or whether they leveraged biblical hermeneutics for their own perceived advantage. Rather it demonstrates the role of translation in knowledge construction and categorization of the Mbuti: International networks of Bible translators and ethnographers, often collaborating ecumenically and across-disciplines, used the academic tools at their disposal and the experience on the ground in order to construct the identities of others. It also gives evidence of the prominence of a global biblical hermeneutic in the self-understanding of Kivebulaya and his African associates as members of a global Christian community: the multi-layered collaboration between Europeans, African church leaders and the people amongst whom they worked shows how the transnational movement they considered themselves to be part actually functioned.

TRANSLATION AND CORPORATE IDENTITY

Examining the rationale of African missionaries shows the extent to which Bible translation was an impetus for the formation of both national identities and of creating a transnational imagined community. Whilst assertions of the potential of Bible translation to aid the construction of national identity are demonstrably true, there are other, sometimes overlapping, forms of corporate identity constructed with reference to the biblical text. The familiar argument that linguistic work of vernacular Bible translations created ethno-

⁸⁸ Nguba Martin, 'Approche biblique pour une œuvre missionnaire en milieu (Cas des Mbuti de la forêt de l'Ituri au Zaïre) dissertation de licence, Bangui, CAR, 1989.

nationalist ambitions is compelling in the Nyoro case.⁸⁹ It makes little sense, however, in the Mbuti case. Furthermore, it overlooks the fashioning of Christian identity as primary by Kivebulaya and his associates and later Revivalists.

Runyoro-Rutoro speakers appeared able to control and utilise vernacular translation in ways they had chosen, albeit with limited long-term political success. The wider purposes of translation were shaped by the enthusiasms of a literate political elite. Even though these elites understood themselves to be marginalised within the colonial system, they were able to marshal support and action. The Runyoro-Rutoro case also indicates the competing national sensibilities that existed within the colonial state. Biblical texts and their vernacular translations were not simply used by the Ganda and their colonial and missionary supporters to exert wider influence; they were also appropriated by the Nyoro and Toro and *their* missionaries for their own ends. The Nyoro and Toro already shared the cultural and religious novelties of their antagonists and used them to assert their greater autonomy within the colonial state. They were not as severely marginalised as other groups in the colonial state and could utilise concepts of kingship shared by the Ganda and the British.⁹⁰ The extent to which the Nyoro and Toro elites perceived themselves to gain relative forms of autonomy is connected to the extent to which a bibliocentric form of Christianity took hold among them. Toro, where Kivebulaya's work of translation had started and which had originally benefited from close relations with the Ganda, developed a larger Anglican

⁸⁹ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 125.

⁹⁰ Justin Willis, 'A Portrait for the Mukama: Monarchy and Empire in Colonial Bunyoro Uganda,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* vol 34, 1 (2006) 105-122, examines the negotiations around different forms of centralised authority after the Nyangire uprising.

Church than the Nyoro, who became Catholics in larger numbers or did not convert at all. Compelling though the nationhood argument might be for Runyoro-Rutoro speakers, they obtained only an ethno-nationalism within a wider colonial state in which demands for the whole Bible were one of the few concessions that Runyoro-Rutoro speakers gained.

JDY Peel's assertion that missionaries worked with models of nation-states which operated around notions of the *ethnos* as linguistically distinct were put to the test in colonial Uganda.⁹¹ Ideologies of translation were compromised in competing notions of how different ethnic groups might exist in the same state and what conditions were necessary for church and state unity. Centralised forms of unity espoused by Fisher, the Mengo Church Council *et al* were attempts to replicate a Ganda Protestantism in governance, language and society which could neither be countenanced by their recent allies, the Toro, nor their long-standing adversaries, the Nyoro. They claimed for their own the national theologies of the Old Testament by demanding its translation.

The evidence provided by Kivebulaya's Mbuti translation suggests that it encouraged the formation of Mbuti identity *by others and* on an international level. It contributed to scholarly work which removed assumptions of sub-humanity, childlikeness or degradation of pygmies and therefore their linguistic and cultural inferiority and paved the way for Colin Turnbull's romanticised portrayal of a pure and harmonious forest life.⁹² However, it did little to overcome the exotic identity bestowed upon them or their continued

⁹¹ Peel, *Religious Encounter*, 280-1.

⁹² Bahuchet, 'L'Invention des Pygmées,' 169. Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961)

marginality. The Mbuti members of the Anglican Church in Congo, like the other people groups in the area, used the Nyoro Bible and Prayer Book until translations in Swahili became available.⁹³ The people of Mboga, on the edge of the Ituri forest, spoke a form of Nyoro and so gained influence in a Church which still benefited from its connections with Uganda whilst they remained marginal within the Congo state. At least in the trajectory of this study of translation, the political space of the Mbuti continued to be largely circumscribed by others around them through the circulation of knowledge about them.

Yet Kivebulaya's 'Lumbuti' translation cannot simply be used to nuance the argument that assumes that vernacular translations must promote collective political aspirations. The process of translation from the encounter between Kivebulaya and the Mbuti, to published primer; from primer to the manuscript of a Gospel; from manuscript to Smith's painstaking linguistic study and scholarly collaboration allows a view of international Christian networks that held a regard for both the local and the vernacular. These networks also demonstrate the missionary theology of a universal church that simultaneously glories in 'cultural pluralism' of the local and particular. Kivebulaya and Edwin Smith were, in their self-understanding, part of the same global community. They also understood that Bible translation was an initial step in making the universal community accessible to the Mbuti.

Kivebulaya and other translators worked within a Protestant bibliocentrism for 'all nations'. The religious change that Kivebulaya propounded was part of a process internal to

⁹³ Emma Wild-Wood, *Migration and Christian Identity in Congo (DRC)* (Leiden, 2008), 26-7, 36-37, 69-70.

the indigenous societies he knew. It took place, however, within negotiations about the merits of external influence, and within an ideology of universal Christian belonging propagated by missionaries like Kivebulaya, who operated in an intensely local way but held within themselves a much wider perspective, informed by their Christian belief, that influenced their actions and caused them to seek connections beyond any given locality.

Many transcended borders both physically, mentally and spiritually, living at a translocal level and believing they inhabited a community of transnational scope. Unlike Maxwell's Luba evangelists, Kivebulaya was uninterested in either Ganda or Toro patriotism.

Kivebulaya's tenacious commitment to a single, linguistically plural global Christian identity during a period of ethno-nationalist creation has produced contested legacies in popular memory. Early East African Revivalists, like Blasio Kigozi and Simeoni Nsibambi, were inspired by Kivebulaya's evangelistic journeys across the boundaries of ethnic affiliation, state borders and linguistic divides.⁹⁴ The ethnically diverse Anglican Church in Ituri remembered Kivebulaya as a great missionary. However, Ganda patriots in the 1950s also laid claim to Kivebulaya's memory, writing of him as an example of Ganda paternal responsibility for all Uganda.⁹⁵ Among the Toro he is remembered as the missionary to the Mbuti, not as the first translator of the Runyoro-Rutoro Bible nor as a significant of Toro's religious change. In the kingdom where later revivalism was to be tempered by patriotic

⁹⁴ Blasio Kigozi, *Awake! An African Calling: The Story of Blasio Kigozi and his vision of Revival* (London, 1936), p.6; Interview Apolo Nsibambi, Kampala, 30 June 2015.

⁹⁵ G. K. Katongole, *Rev. Canon Apolo Kivebulaya*, (Kampala, n.d.) Chapter 8.

loyalty to territorial boundaries, Kivebulaya is remembered as only acting outside those boundaries.⁹⁶

CONCLUSION

Investigating one translator and his two translations has demonstrated the varied impact of Bible translation in forming ethnic and international Christian identities. Aspirations to create a global community have often coalesced and collided with aspirations towards nationhood. The Runyoro-Rutoro case study confirms a progression from Protestant bibliocentrism to vernacular literature, and then to the formation of cohesive ethnic groups, claiming political space in the colonial state. This progression was informed by notions of nationhood in biblical texts. For those most intimately involved in the process of Bible translation, these political identities were regarded as a bi-product. The story of Mbuti Bible translation demonstrates another bi-product, that of the advance and dissemination of linguistic and anthropological knowledge among an international group of scholar - missionaries and translators. Yet it also shows the historical construction of the wider imagined community of which Kivebulaya considered himself a part. He showed no particular commitment to the nationalist projects of either the Ganda, the British or the Nyoro and Toro. He was committed to Christian conversion and the spread of the Christian church beyond the boundaries of ethno-linguistic groups or colonial state apparatus. Whilst some biblical narratives bolstered nationhood, those that Kivebulaya prioritised undid it.

⁹⁶ Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, 260-1.

The literature on the creation of ethno-nationalisms has largely subsumed the influence of the imagined universal Christian community within the political dynamic of cultural nationalism. A renewed attention to missionary motivations and transnational links in vernacular translation has allowed an analysis of alternative identities. Such an attention calls for a re-examination of the many early converts, like Kivebulaya, who imagined a linguistically plural yet global community of faith (enmeshed with the local and immediate). In East Africa they are precursors to the Revivalists who perpetuated a vision of a Christian community which argued against conformity to ethno-nationalist ideas. Revivalists renounced clan and ethnic affiliation, redefined political communities, and were connected regionally and globally with similar movements.⁹⁷ They also indicate a long lineage within Africa of transnational understandings of Christianity.

⁹⁷ See Emma Wild-Wood, 'The East African Revival in the Study of African Christianity,' 201-212, in Kevin Ward and Wild-Wood (eds), *The East African Revival: History and Legacies* (Surrey, 2012).