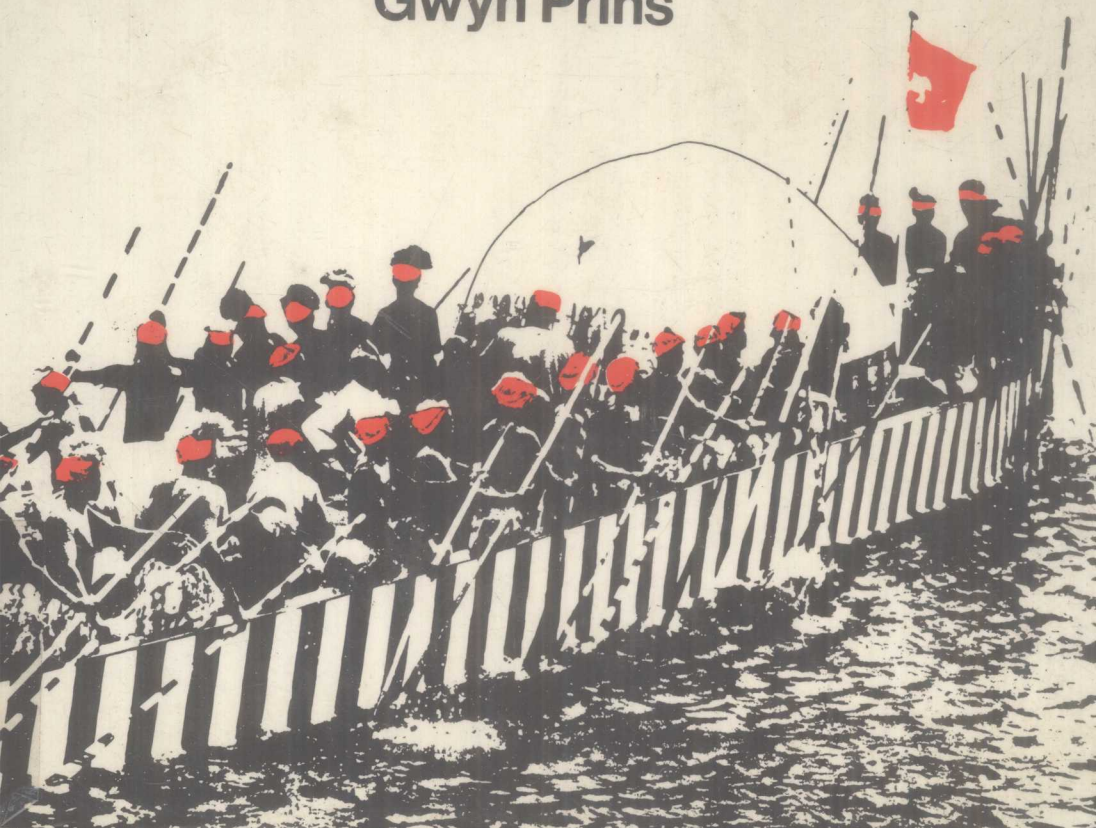


Reappraisal in African history:
the early colonial experience
in western Zambia

The Hidden Hippopotamus

Gwyn Prins



THE HIDDEN HIPPOPOTAMUS

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the early colonial experience
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*Mbu. . .wa fulanga meyi matungu,
musheke ni mu k'onga.*

The hippopotamus. . .swirls the deepest waters [in the river],
the white sands of the shallows betray him.

(Version of a still well known Luyana proverb as it
was recorded in about 1895; Jacottet, *Études*, vol. III,
p. 188, No. 2)

*kwa Sichaba
ni kwa lubasi lwa ka
buka ye i fiwa
ka lilato*

Preface

The historian of an African society most closely resembles that circus acrobat who balances at the apex of a human pyramid. Whatever he can do there and whatever he can see from his vantage point he owes in large measure to those who support him. The making of this book has been a long and expensive process and the pyramid is commensurately large.

The research upon which this work is based was conducted in two stints. The first, from October 1972 to October 1976, was financed by a Hayter award from the Department of Education and Science, a University of Cambridge Allen scholarship, grants from the Jan Smuts Memorial Fund and an interest-free loan from Emmanuel College. From March 1973 to May 1975 I lived in Bulozzi. The second stint, from October 1976, was made possible by a Research Fellowship at Emmanuel College. From January to September 1977 I returned to Bulozzi to continue my field research, a trip facilitated by an SSRC Research Project grant and a further interest-free capital loan from Emmanuel College which enabled me to purchase a new and specially equipped Land Rover that was shipped to Africa for my use. Throughout the work, the College has stepped in to help where others could not and by ensuring that, particularly on my second field trip, I had the tools for the job, this concern has significantly improved the type and quantity of work that I could do. My gratitude to the Fellowship is profound.

During my first stay in Zambia I was affiliated to the Institute for African Studies of the University of Zambia. The Director of the day, J. van Velsen, loaned me an Institute Land Rover and my thanks go to him and to the international team of six mechanics who taught me to take it to pieces and to renovate it, component after component as each failed, so that it finally worked reliably. On the second field trip the Director of the Livingstone Museum, the late K. Mubitana, the acting Director M. Cheliah and their staff gave us a most hospitable *pied à terre* and a lot of practical help. The tragic early death of Kaf Mubitana in a motor accident

Preface

in June 1978 is a bitter blow to all who seek to understand Zambia's history.

But in Zambia, home for three years was Sefula. I am deeply indebted to the Rev. Musialela and the Western Presbytery of the United Church of Zambia who permitted us to use a house on the Mission Station during our first trip and to M. Thompson, headmaster of Sefula secondary school, who loaned us a leave house in 1977. But home is more than a house. The Rev. and Mrs E. Berger helped us to learn the Lozi language and to learn about the people whom they loved and served for nearly half a century until the Rev. Berger's death in 1978.

From officers at every level of the Zambian Government I received interest and much help. My thanks go to successive Permanent Secretaries for Western Province with whom I had dealings, to the Provincial Administration staff in Mongu, to District Governors, District Secretaries, their staffs at the Bomas and the members of the Messenger Service in all the Districts of Buluzi. Of the specialist departments, the Mechanical Services Branch, Mongu, came to know my Institute Land Rover rather well in 1973-5. In other departments, I thank D. Vernon of the Agricultural Research Station, Mongu and his staff; M. Cessford, R. Billington, B. Mushewa and M. Soepboer of Government and Aid agricultural extension services respectively; S. Revell, Veterinary Research Officer, District Veterinary Officers R. Nelson and J. Jørgensen and their staffs; Drs Blom, de Vente and van Rhijn of Senanga hospital simultaneously and successively and their staffs; the doctors and staffs of the Mission hospitals at Yuka (Kalabo District), Luampa (Kaoma District), and Mwandi (Sesheke District) and D. K. Sitali, Clerk of the High Court at Mongu.

The work would not have been possible in the form which it took without the interest and help of the late *Litunga* Mbikusita Lewanika, the *Litunga* Ilute Yeta, *Ngambela* G. Mukande and the members of the Lealui Kuta. Similarly, at Nalolo I am deeply grateful to the *Mulena Mukwae* Makwibi Mwanawina and the *Ishee Kwandu*, to the *Sambi*, B. Muhongo and the *Natamoyo*, *Mwanamulena* M. Yeta, both of whom travelled with me at different times in search of certain types of informant, and to the members of the Nalolo Kuta. I owe special debts to my friends *Mutompehi* S. Situmbeko, who taught me much and helped me a great deal when I was still floundering and uncertain, and *Mutompehi* Y. W. Mupatu, one of Buluzi's foremost historians with whom I had the privilege of working closely over many months in 1977. Arthur Siyunyii and I had a lot of fun in the course of doing a lot of work together and in 1977 Christopher Wamulume laboured long hours transcribing tapes of formal traditions. Many school teachers and local court staff helped their

neighbours to record their village and personal histories for me and my deep thanks go to them and to the hundreds of people all over Bulozhi who allowed me to learn from them.

Friends elsewhere in Zambia made essential and much appreciated contributions, especially the Lorenzes who made their home our home in Lusaka. Erhard Lorenz read early drafts of the work and made acute and important criticisms; for this and much more my wife and I are grateful. Peter Hutchinson of the Zambia Meteorological Service, J. G. M. Simpson, and Mrs M. Plesner helped in different and valuable ways. S. Branum and pilots of the Government Flight enabled me to make photo reconnaissance over the floodplain.

I received help from the staffs of the National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka; the Air Photograph Library, Mulungushi House, Lusaka; the National Archives of Zimbabwe, Salisbury, and, while I was there, Dr I. Phimister guided me in their use. In Europe I was assisted at the Public Record Office, London, at Rhodes House, Oxford and by the archivist of SOAS Library, London. Mlle J-M. Léonard of the Bibliothèque du DEFAP, Paris went to great pains to help me find material during a visit made possible by a generous grant from the University of Cambridge Political Science Fund. In Switzerland I am much indebted to the Bolanzes, to Mlle M. Borle and to the Rev. J-P. Burger. The Rev. Burger gave to me freely from his deep knowledge and extensive and precious sources about Bulozhi. He read this book in manuscript with a meticulous detail from which I profited enormously. Sadly, he died whilst it was in press. In England, M. Armor, G. C. R. Clay, Miss D. Mallion and E. Wulfson helped through diverse and important contributions. My typist, Patricia Reay, created miraculous order from a ramshackle draft.

My academic debts are few but deep. David Phillipson talked to me about Zambian archaeology; Jock Galloway has pondered my air photographs; many of the basic ideas were argued out with Richard Waller, John Waliggo and my students between 1976 and 1978. I owe much to John Iliffe who has been a meticulous and invaluable critic at all stages of the work, not least during the writing of this book. I am also grateful to several of the participants in the 1976 Bologna conference of anthropology and history for comments on an early paper about problems of interpreting oral data.

Many friends and colleagues within and without the academic world have read part or all of the completed manuscript. Since it would be invidious to have to name some and not all, I shall name none. But I am very deeply indebted to them all for valuable comments which of course does not mean that they necessarily agreed with all they read. Responsibility for the final analysis is mine alone.

Preface

My last debts are really prior to all the others. They are to my parents, who saw to it that I had the right skills and encouraged me to go to Africa first in 1969 when the seeds of the present work were sown, and to Miriam. She has been part of the whole process: the excitement of fieldwork, the discoveries of new materials, the flux of ideas, innumerable drafts of each sentence; but also the other things: the physical hardships, the illnesses, the worry, the frustration. She survived and therefore so did I and so the work has been finished. What more can I say? Oh yes, our dog, Mister Bear, who hunted mambas, cobras and scorpions and so ensured that Miriam survived deserves the last word, for in a sense it all depended on his sharp nose.

Emmanuel College
Cambridge
October 1979

Gwyn Prins

Glossary of commonly used Lozi terms

A note about plural forms. Lozi nouns form their plurals by taking *prefixes*. There are at least nine classes of noun, classified by their prefix forms. (I write 'at least' because a recent dissertation upon the structure of Silozi proposes that we should entertain substantially more categories!) As a rule, there is a special plural prefix corresponding to each singular prefix. Below, I give the plural forms which are used in the text in parentheses after the singular, and also provide cross-references.

<i>balimu</i>	see <i>mulimu</i>	<i>mazulu</i>	see <i>lizulu</i>
<i>baloi</i>	see <i>muloi</i>	<i>mbuwa (Luyana)</i>	the king, as in <i>likomu za mbuwa</i> , royal cattle
<i>bonamukau</i>	see <i>namukau</i>		
<i>buhobe</i>	porridge		
<i>buloi</i>	witchcraft	<i>mishiku</i>	see <i>mushiku</i>
<i>busunso</i>	relish	<i>mukulo</i>	floodplain/ bush margin
<i>coliso</i>	installation		
<i>Kuta</i>	court	<i>Mulanziane</i>	senior chief in the Sesheke (south- ernmost) district
<i>lapa (malapa)</i>	courtyard		
<i>likolo (makolo)</i>	'regiment' or labour unit	<i>Mulena Mukwae</i>	chieftainness of the south
<i>likute</i>	politeness, respect	<i>muleneñ</i>	capital town
<i>lilalo</i>	see <i>silalo</i>	<i>muliani</i>	medicine
<i>lindaleti</i>	see <i>ndaleti</i>	<i>mulimu (balimu)</i>	spirit
<i>lindumeleti</i>	see <i>ndumeleti</i>	<i>muloi (baloi)</i>	witch
<i>liñaka</i>	see <i>ñaka</i>	<i>Muluilonga</i>	'the Noble Age' (also <i>mulongalui</i>)
<i>liñomboti</i>	see <i>ñomboti</i>		
<i>litino</i>	see <i>sitino</i>	<i>muñ'a munzi</i>	'owner of the village'; village headman
<i>Litunga</i>	'the Earth': the king	<i>mushiku (mishiku)</i>	descent group
<i>lizulu (mazulu)</i>	raised mound in the plain	<i>mushitu</i>	the bush, forest
<i>mafulo</i>	floodtime	<i>Nalikwanda</i>	royal barge
	encampment, travelling camp	<i>namukau</i> (<i>bonamukau</i>)	state garden
<i>makolo</i>	see <i>likolo</i>	<i>Natamoyo</i>	'Minister of Justice'
<i>malapa</i>	see <i>lapa</i>	<i>ndaleti (lindaleti)</i>	guardian of <i>namukau</i>
<i>maoma</i>	royal drums		

<i>ndumeleti</i> (<i>lindumeleti</i>)	roving emissary; tribute collecting chief	<i>ñomboti</i> (<i>liñomboti</i>) <i>ku omboka</i>	priest-guardian ‘to get out of the water’: to transhume
<i>Ngambela</i>	‘speak for me’: ‘Prime Minister’		territorial unit
<i>ngomalume</i>	Dance of the Men	<i>silalo (lilalo)</i>	rich peat soil
<i>Nyambe</i>	the High God	<i>sishanjo</i>	royal grave
<i>ñaka (liñaka)</i>	healer, practitioner	<i>sitino (litino)</i>	
<i>ñamba</i>	tribute		

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