ORAL TRADITIONS CONCERNING THE EARLY IRON AGE
IN NORTHWESTERN TANZANIA

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During the 1960's numerous historians and social anthropologists have conducted historical research in Tanzania, the results of which have been based largely upon oral traditions collected during this decade. Not surprisingly, these investigators have generally had to be content with traditions that extend back only one to two hundred years. Exceptions include migration traditions of royal clans that appear to go back a century further, although a greater time depth may actually be involved. When Andrew Roberts assessed the collection of oral traditions in Tanzania, therefore, he stated that "there seem to be no 'professional' historians in Tanzania chiefdoms in the sense of officials whose sole business it is to preserve and transmit knowledge of the past." Formal traditions, those learned and passed on in a fixed format, are virtually nonexistent and commentaries about a person or an event compose the bulk of available traditions. Where informal traditions exist the investigator is forced to seek the informant's knowledge through intensive questioning. Although somewhat disappointing to the academic community involved, these efforts have added significantly to our understanding of East African history, particularly during the nineteenth century.

My research experience on Bukerebe (Ukerewe) differed substantially from that of my predecessors in Tanzania because of two basic factors, the relatively small Kerebe population and the presence of two outstanding informants. Bukerebe is an island of approximately 240 square miles, and according to the census report of 1957, there were 77,000 inhabitants on the island. The small geographical area together with the limited size of the population was advantageous in seeking well-informed elders who, unfortunately, were few in number.

1. Field research on Bukerebe (Ukerewe is the Swahili version of the island's name) in 1968 and 1969 was made possible by a fellowship granted to the author by the Foreign Area Fellowship Program. The material presented in this paper as well as the opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Fellowship Program. I also wish to acknowledge the valuable comments made on an earlier draft of this paper by Drs. Roy C. Bridges and John A. Rowe.
2. Andrew Roberts discusses their contribution in his excellent Introduction to Tanzania before 1900, A. Roberts, ed. (Nairobi, 1968), v-xx.
3. Ibid., ix.
but relatively accessible. Two extremely knowledgeable informants accounted for an unusually large corpus of significant oral data that is invaluable for a region depending almost solely on oral traditions to reconstruct history before 1875. Both men exceeded eighty years of age. Unfortunately for purposes of verification but fortunately for diversity of information, their traditions were basically dissimilar. Buyanza s/o Nansagate possessed traditions concerning the dominant royal clan, of which he is a member, in addition to significant revelations concerning Kerebe relations with other communities around the shores of the Victoria Nyanza during the nineteenth century. The second elder, Bahitwa s/o Lugambage, is a member of a formerly subordinate royal clan and, while his traditions are less specialized than Buyanza’s, they encompass all Kerebe clans, not just the royal clans.

It is the purpose of this paper to examine the role performed by Bahitwa in Kerebe society and to submit his traditions relating to the early Iron Age for examination, thereby revealing the Kerebe historian’s role in an earlier era, introducing problems associated with his oral traditions, and discussing them in relation to existing evidence.

Bahitwa and Buyanza should not be classified as merely unusually good informants; they are nothing less than historians. Bahitwa is a professional, though not in the sense of Roberts’ definition. The Kerebe did not possess official court historians "whose whole business" was "to preserve and transmit" history. The Kerebe historians were composed of a small nucleus of men only unofficially attached to the court who acquired on their own volition unusual amounts of informal traditions concerning one or more aspects of Kerebe history. Social recognition and status were corollaries to a well-informed mind, but the ultimate acknowledgement that a man had achieved the status of historian was contingent upon the omukama’s (chief) assessment and use of his information. In 1968 Bahitwa was the sole Kerebe survivor of this tradition. He, not unnaturally, regards himself as the Kerebe historian (omwanzuizi); others recognize him as such although they immediately qualify this by emphasizing that he does not always provide accurate details.

Buyanza, on the other hand, does not regard himself as an omwanzuizi, nor did he ever intend to become one. He acquired his traditions out of personal curiosity because he wished to understand why certain customs existed and what his royal ancestors had accomplished. Nonetheless, to a non-Kerebe he is an historian and, unlike Bahitwa, Buyanza is literate. He received his education at the turn of the century, became a Christian, and traveled extensively outside Bukerebe. Some four years older than Bahitwa, he personally witnessed and remembers events that occurred before 1895, when colonial rule became effective in the chiefdom. His ability to perceive change in Kerebe life has been heightened by his experiences. He left the island shortly after the turn of the century, clerked briefly near Mwanza, then became an askari (soldier) for fourteen years.

5. The dominant royal dynasty was that founded by the Silanga clan. Bahitwa’s clan, the Kula, had controlled the southern portion of the island and neighboring peninsula to the east, but friction between the two clans commenced by the 1700’s. The Silanga continually dominated the relationship while simultaneously forcing the Kula farther to the west. By the 1850’s the Kula had been driven to the southwestern portion of Bukerebe island.
participating in both the Maji Maji rising and the First World War before returning to Bukerebe in 1919. He is not recognized by the Kerebe as an historian -- merely a wise elder.

By becoming an omwanzuzi, Bahitwa pursued a highly-regarded position in Kerebe society. Until recently, if an omwanzuzi proved trustworthy and earned a reputation for possessing reliable traditions, his name would be mentioned when difficult legal cases confronted the omukama, cases that required a knowledge of clan land rights or legal precedent. On such occasions the omukama sought advice from his counselors and if they did not know the necessary details, they and the omukama would consult one who did. The novice-historian at that point could be called to the royal court where he was interrogated to determine the extent of his knowledge. If the novice passed this rather formidable examination, he and his family were promised a day at court, where he was given an ornament to wear that distinguished him as a royal advisor; he might also receive a cow. Highly-regarded historians were few in number since a lifetime was required to come near completion of a never-completed task. Only exceptional individuals actively pursued this elusive distinction.

Personality and circumstances played a part in Bahitwa's efforts to achieve recognition as an omwanzuzi. He was his father's youngest son, born into the royal Kula clan; since the early eighteenth century his clan has been subordinate to the Silanga, which claims kinship with the awesome Ruhinda the Great of the west lake region. Nonetheless the Kula were representatives of a privileged minority. Bahitwa himself possesses a serious demeanor and displays little humor. He continually seeks reassurance that he knows more history than anyone else. He found my practice of seeking traditions from others disturbing -- and a waste of time. One could not but assume that the seldom-mentioned story of his real father bore heavily upon his mind and partially explained his passion for becoming noteworthy as an omwanzuzi. The gossip relates that his mother was pregnant when Lugambage of the Kula clan married her. Bahitwa's real father, it is said, was actually a Kara, a people composing a low social stratum within Kerebe society during the nineteenth century. His traditions are interesting, and perhaps revealing, in their ascribed unity of all Bantu-speaking clans who migrated into the interlacustrine area from two dispersal centers, Buha and Bunyoro. Unlike Buyanza, who sharply distinguishes in his mind between different chieftoms and peoples with their varying customs, Bahitwa sweeps through customs and even across linguistic frontiers without a moment's hesitation. Bantu-speaking clans in the interlacustrine region are of the essence for him regardless of where they live: if a Nyamwezi of the Sindi clan comes to visit Bahitwa, he is treated as a Sindi living on Bukerebe because the clan has its origin in Rwanda and Buha. Bahitwa knows the clan so he knows the visitor.

Bahitwa's information about his personal life reflects basic characteristics. He claims to have been an obedient child, one who never grumbled when told to run an errand or to herd cattle. Because of his good behavior, which infers a respect for his elders and their customs, he was frequently summoned to distribute pombe (banana beer) for the older men. On these occasions a boy could learn considerable amounts of tradition simply by listening attentively to

6. Although the Silanga identify themselves with the Hinda clan of the Haya states and Buzinha, they are not direct descendents of Ruhinda the Great.
the long discussions. The lad who exhibited these qualities was a favorite of his father as well as of the elders since most boys did not appreciate having their time consumed in this fashion. Bahitwa's interest in tradition also benefited from a half-sister's marriage to the Silanga omukama; because of this, his father would go to the Silanga court from time to time to visit his daughter and participate in the discussions there. Afterward, he recounted the day's events and news to those at home, including his youngest son. When Bahitwa married, he made his decision to become a Kerebe historian. He was then in a position to query elders on a man-to-man basis in his effort to acquire their traditions; coffee beans for chewing or pombe were customary gifts to his informants.

When asked what personal benefits he expected to gain from being an historian, Bahitwa responded that he could then please people when he spoke about events of which they knew nothing; consequently, they would listen to him with interest. Nor did he neglect to remind me that both Omukama Ruhumbika (d. 1938) and his successor, Lukumbuzya, called upon him for advice in recent years. He has earned both attention and respect, yet his appetite for both appears insatiable. If he was found wanting when questions were asked, he would sometimes fabricate an answer, particularly during the initial interviews, or he would request that I ask again later because he wanted to "think about it." This usually meant that he would try to find someone who could give him the information, and relay it to me at our next meeting. He was extremely secretive about his living informants although he readily discussed the deceased ones.

When confronted by conflicting traditions in his early years as an omwanzuzi, he had an established procedure for determining the version that he eventually accepted. He had a limited number of trusted teachers, experts whom he respected greatly and conflicting data were taken to them for assessment. In this manner he continually expanded his body of historical knowledge, verifying it at the same time. His procedure for refreshing his memory is also noteworthy. Any stranger he meets is immediately asked for his father's or grandfather's name; Bahitwa then informs the person of his clan's history as far back as either Buha or Bunyoro.

Not surprisingly, some people regard him as a pompous bore. He seeks continual self-aggrandizement and his means of achieving it are to astonish others with his factual storehouse. Although a somewhat irascible character, he is an intriguing remnant of an earlier age. He is one of the few elders who still adheres faithfully to previous customs. His language can be classified as high Kerebe, a type seldom spoken anymore. He never attended school, knows limited Swahili, and has never accepted Christianity although he is a frequent visitor of the priests at the local parish. While jealously guarding his history, he is fully aware that his knowledge will perish with him, a fact that he finds disturbing. This, of course, makes him vulnerable because others who, in his opinion, know next to nothing are literate and write and are therefore able to preserve their traditions. This was the determining factor in convincing him to assist me in reconstructing Kerebe history.

With a seemingly endless capacity to recall clan and place names, he left me in a quandry for some five months. Because he was not an easy man to interview, he was visited infrequently at first and his knowledge was used to verify what was learned elsewhere. Not until smithing traditions, which could be related to known archaeological evidence about the early Iron Age, were discussed
did his mass of facts begin to become comprehensible. Then it became a matter of time and persistent questioning to dislodge his information in a meaningful fashion. What was disclosed appears to be of incalculable value for reconstructing the past of northwestern East Africa, casting considerable light on a little known period. His edited material does not resolve the many perplexing problems confronting historians, but it does provide new leads for investigation and suggests further questions to be asked.

Bahitwa and Buyanza are introduced to provide a base from which to contrast my experience in collecting oral traditions with that of Jan Vansina. In presenting his views on methodology for collecting oral tradition, Vansina adamantly warns researchers against using men such as Buyanza and Bahitwa:

A third type of informant to be avoided -- and the worst of the lot -- is the man who has derived his information from a number of different sources in order to get to know the history of his society. He creates a personal version of this history in which all the contradictions of the resources he has used are obliterated, and to which he has added his own interpretation. His testimony is quite worthless, because it is second-hand, and it is necessary to go back to all the traditions he has used in order to be able to evaluate it.7

Vansina naturally prefers the specialists, or their descendants, who can provide valuable material on a particular aspect of society; in other words, the role that informant performed within society. The professional or court historian, of course, would fall into his category of specialists and their histories could be understood within the context of society and its ruling stratum. They would possess official history.

While Vansina's method advocates going to a "primary" source of oral tradition, or as close as possible to it, this method does not satisfactorily deal with information from traditional historians who are not necessarily court historians, men whose traditions do not revolve solely around the ruler, his battles, and his wealth. In Bahitwa's case, his primary concern is with clan activities and he is therefore very much a peoples' historian, not a court or tribal historian. On the other hand, Buyanza is fundamentally an unofficial court historian with a very heavy bias toward economic and diplomatic relationships. For the most part the information possessed by these two men is "second-hand" and their informants are no longer living. How, then, can their knowledge be used? Philip Curtin has discussed the value of the professional historian, that is, those who retain "formal" traditions, emanating from his West African experience.8 But apparently neither Curtin nor such East African historians as B. A. Ogot, Gideon S. Were, and John Osogo have been confronted by a professional historian who

has acquired "informal" traditions and committed them to memory.9 This type of historian is one who has sought out oral traditions on his own accord, but has not committed them to writing.10 His knowledge may encompass a wide range of topics about the clans, persons, and events that have attracted his interest. The traditions are characteristically weak in their chronological structure, and information about people and events often presents a veritable maze to an outsider. Yet because these historians are not trained in conventional methodology, must their information be disregarded? Can no means be found to utilize their hard-won information? To cast them aside would be to ignore substantial amounts of otherwise unattainable history. It would doubtless be embarrassing to learn how much accepted history found in travel literature and early ethnographic surveys was based on unsound methodology -- though it tends to be used with more assurance than oral traditions now collected. Of course Africanists are now conscious of past shortcomings and are endeavoring to improve upon earlier techniques. But if Vansina's suggested methodology was used for reconstructing Kerebe history, for example, acceptable data would be available only on the origins of one royal clan and some aspects of nineteenth- and twentieth-century history. It is therefore mandatory to find some means of using "second-hand" information without prostituting sound historical methodology.

Historians necessarily insist upon verification. Unfortunately, verification of oral tradition is arduous, frustrating, and all too frequently impossible. It is an unpleasant fact that in Tanzania, which does not generally possess formal traditions, oral historians have assumed their role as much as one to two generations too late. In spite of this severe limitation, valuable contributions have been made to our knowledge of history before 1800.11 But thus far attention has been riveted upon migrations and political developments in the early period, a condition fostered by historical methodology, time, finances, and fatigue. Presumably, potentially valuable information is not being used because it cannot be verified, although historians will undoubtedly make use of such accumulated data when the opportunity arises. In the meantime, everyone must be content to wait. It has been suggested that this tentative type of information be made available for scrutiny but the time and energy necessary for this, at least as Curtin would have it, arouse doubts as to its widespread adoption.12

An alternative method is illustrated below. An edited version of Bahitwa's information, extracted from a total of eight interviews, four of which were tape-recorded, is presented for assessment and verification by other scholars. His material involves an extraordinarily wide geographical region -- western Tanzania and Bantu-speaking Uganda -- in addition to an unusual time depth of over one millennium, assuming recent carbon dates from eastern Africa are

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associated with the early Bantu-speaking migrants.\textsuperscript{13} There is no doubt in Bahitwa's mind about the difference between Bantu and non-Bantu-speaking people -- it is a we/they relationship. Unfortunately he has always been geographically separated from his dispersal centers and so has never been in a position to collect data about the earliest Bantu-speaking immigrants in Buha and Bunyoro.

Bahitwa's testimony, broken into loose groups for reference, is as follows:

1

Some eighty Bantu-speaking clans have lived on Bukerebe at one time or another.\textsuperscript{14} Approximately half of them [thirty-eight] came from Buha. After leaving Buha these people moved into Buzinza. Sometimes entire clans then shifted from there, but usually it was only a small segment. They traveled westward through Bugwe [Usukuma]. Some remained there while others moved on until they passed around the southeastern corner of the lake and entered this country [Bukerebe]. There were no islands here then; they were not formed until Ruhind'a's time [possibly in the late 1820's]. A second group of clans [ten] left Buha and traveled north into Buhaya. From there they passed south into Buzinza, then Bugwe and finally here. A third small group of clans [four] left Buha and traveled to the north, through Buhaya, and then around the north end of the lake, and down the east side to Bukerebe.

2

Another major group of clans [twenty-eight] came to Bukerebe from Bunyoro. Half of them came south along the west side of the lake while the other half moved eastward, around the lake, and then south along the eastern shore of the lake. Most of these people arrived before the Silanga [the royal family came around 1670].\textsuperscript{15} Those clans that came from Bunyoro on the west side took various routes. Most came south through the grasslands while others passed near the lake shore or traveled through the Congo and then into Buha before finding their way here.

3

The first Bantu-speaking clan to arrive here was the Gara. They came from Ghana, Dr. Nkrumah's country. The Gara are the only ones who came from there; all the other clans originated in


\textsuperscript{14} I have taken liberties in paragraphs 1 and 2 by using numbers compiled from Bahitwa's information. He never referred to groups of clans in this manner; rather, each clan was enumerated one by one.

\textsuperscript{15} A mid-seventeenth-century arrival date for the royal clan is based upon an estimated average reign of sixteen years for seventeen different \textit{abakama}, thereby arriving at an arbitrary date of 1668.
Bunyoro. The Gara learned that other people had preceded them to Bukerebe, both the Kangara [Tatoga] and before them, the Sandasya [Sandawe]. But neither were living here then.

4

The Gara traveled alone from West Africa to Bunyoro. From there a part of them went to Mombasa because they were hunting an elephant. They passed north of Uganda. When they reached Mombasa they killed an elephant from which they took a tusk. Then they dug a hole and buried it together with a pot. When they arrived there they met people who looked like Asians who lived near Mombasa. These latter people wanted to take the country for they pretended to be the original inhabitants. But the Gara did not accept this. When the Europeans came, the Gara took their case to them. Because the Gara had the evidence of the pot and ivory they had buried, they were judged to be the owners and hence they took the country. Some of the Gara became Muslims.

5

Another portion of the Gara left Bunyoro and traveled south. In Buhaya they met other Bantu-speaking people. Some settled in Kome, Buzinza, in Kigara village. There they bore many children and later they separated, some going to Bugwe. There are five villages in Bugwe where they lived which were given the name of their clan. From Bugwe some came here to Kigara village and then on to Bukara which was formerly called Bugara.

6

One Gara called Kintu left Ghana and traveled until he reached Buganda with his uncle Muhaya. At Buganda Kintu got a wife from the Songe clan; she bore Buganda who begot Swena who begot Bwantege.

7

Some Gara beat iron though they were never called Longo in Buzinza. Other clans, besides the Gara, who came from both Buha and Bunyoro, had nephews inheriting their uncles' wives. Omukama Nago [c. mid-eighteenth century] stopped that custom here.

8

Before arriving in Buha the clans came from the north and northwest. When passing through forest they were not afraid because they had medicine to protect them. They did not stay in the forest but only passed through it. They hunted and ate their food reserves. They knew that there was good country ahead. They had consulted abafumu [medicine men] before their departure and the abafumu had read the intestines of chickens to determine this information.
After leaving Buha the people went north, south, and east.

The food corps brought by the first people included eleusine (endwero), sorghum (omugusa), simsim, two types of legumes (enkole and enzutwa) and two types of groundnuts (empande and enkuku). Bananas were brought to Bukerebe by Katobaha [around 1670] from Buhaya, Ihangiro district. From Buhaya the banana was taken to Buzinza. From Busoga the Kwabi [Masai] took the banana to Arusha. The Haya did not have bananas before the Kangara passed through the country.

In the early days marriage was easier than today although marriage has always been an arrangement between two clans. But formerly, they had to pay only one hoe or one male goat; sometimes only a verbal agreement (engambo) was necessary with no bridewealth being paid.

Formerly each clan had members who served the others by smithing; only some clans smelted. On Bukerebe smiths could be found on every elevation where people lived. They made hoes here from worn ones. Long ago people did not go to Buzinza for hoes. But they did go there to dig soil that contained iron from the Zinza smiths. It was difficult work and some died there.

The clans that lived in Buzinza as smiths were eventually called Longo. The name refers to all smithing clans who cooperated to do this work, for example, the Singo, Himba, Hyoho and Himbili. The man who gave Zinza smiths this name was Buzinza s/o Bukene, the early Songe who lived at Bwina village, Rusubi district; he is the one who begot all Songe who live in Buzinza, Bugwe and here in Bukerebe. Those smiths who left Buzinza were called abahesi.

Many clans stopped smithing because their neighbors could make better implements and it was also hard work. When one clan gained dominance over its neighbors, it would usually stop beating iron and have the others provide them with tools. The early implements [pre-eighteenth-century] included knives, bill hooks [choppers], adzes, axes, swords, spears and arrows.
The women of each clan formerly produced their own pots and woven fiber containers. The two major kinds of pots included large ones for carrying water and smaller ones for cooking.

When Bantu-speaking peoples entered East Africa they had sheep, goats, dogs and chickens. They later acquired cattle from the Kangara.

The Kangara came from Mt. Elgon. The Kwabi, Somali, Huma [Hima, Tusi], and Kangara are people of the same generation from one man. They all lived together in a country called Mbealulo. They possessed medicine which was blown into a buffalo herd while the animals were resting. The old ones ran away but the calves became dumbfounded and were captured. They made a herd of them; the calves later changed and became cattle. Then the Somali went to their country, the Kwabi went to Nairobi where they had many children and separated into different tribes, some went to Mombasa and then to Arusha.

The Huma and Kangara came around the west side of the lake with the former staying at Karagwe while the latter continued to move on. The Kangara felt hunger pangs en route and exchanged cattle for red millet and simsim. They called millet obwoga and stiff porridge amanywalela. Some reached this country but they did not stay long.

When the Kangara were coming south along the west side of the lake, they met Bantu-speaking people living there. But when they reached Bukerebe, called Bugibwa then, there were no people here. The Sandasya had already left.

The Kangara called tobacco rumbata, which they chewed, half grown millet was hula and talapia fish were called enfwaega, for they ate some fish, too. They grew a little millet and simsim but mainly used cattle blood and beef for food. Most of their millet was acquired by exchanging their cattle for it with other people. Their language could not be understood.

They intermarried some with the Bagwe [Sukuma]. They also married their own cousins and granddaughters [that is, members of the same clan].
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Circumcision was practised by the Kangara even when they came southward through Uganda and Buhaya.

After the Sandasya left here, the Kangara came. But they had already left when the first Bantu-speakers arrived. Much later they returned, during the time of Kahana [around the mid-eighteenth century], and took the mainland where they remained until Mukaka's time [1895-1907].

Well aware that "as a tool of the historian, oral tradition is at best clumsy and unreliable," I discuss Bahitwa's material not in isolation, for it would then be quite incomprehensible, but in light of our existing knowledge. Because so much of his general knowledge is consistent with what we already know, it is not unreasonable to expect that much of the new evidence he offers is sound. This, however, remains to be tested and either verified or discounted through the research of others.

Paragraphs 1 and 2. The origins of the numerous clans and subclans that have lived in Bukerebe are summarized in these two paragraphs. The specific number of clans given for each migratory route should not be accepted as definitive since Bahitwa gave different routes for the same clan on more than one occasion. But the value of the information lies in the general perspective it offers for an understanding of distances traveled and possible routes taken. The complex pattern of migration revealed is certainly not unusual; recent studies among the Abaluya and the Luo have disclosed this same pattern of complexity. By using Buhya and Bunyoro as his two centers of entry into East Africa, Bahitwa is in general agreement with what we know to date. Oral tradition has been accepted up to this point, but "from whence did they come before this"? When Bahitwa was asked this question, he also hesitated, though only briefly. "Naturally," he replied, "they came from Bunyoro." Following insistent questioning he, being a good historian, hedged his answer so that they came from both Bunyoro and the northwest (that is, northwest of Bukerebe). Bunyoro, like so many of the contemporary place names he uses, should be accepted as a broad region or even a direction. Though he holds a number of conflicting views, he basically describes Bunyoro as the area of "creation," where Namuhanga, the Creator (Ruhanga in Lunyoro) created man. As stated in paragraph 3, only one clan or cluster of people entered Bunyoro from the far west. This, however, may well have been a major movement of people. Nonetheless, at this stage of our knowledge, the importance of his assertion is that he emphatically denies any movement of people into Buhya or Bunyoro from the south or southwest. His entire historical orientation is to the north and west.

Since Roland Oliver ventured an initial reconstruction -- based upon the available archaeological and linguistic evidence -- of Bantu-speakers as expanding from the upper Zambezi basin, the movement has stimulated the imagination of Africanists. Oliver proposes that Bantu-speakers entering East Africa north of Lake Tanganyika came from the south or southwest. Although differing in some respects from Oliver's hypothesis, Merrick Posnansky's reconstruction tends to favor a similar movement of the Bantu-speakers, that is, from south to north: "I have argued in favour of a movement of the Dimple based/Channelled ware peoples from an area to the west of the Zambian plateau, to the Zambezi valley and north to the Lake Victoria region." More recently J. E. G. Sutton, with new archaeological evidence from eastern Africa at his disposal, exhibits greater caution while suggesting that the introduction of the Iron Age dates to at least the middle of the first millennium A. D. He also postulates that iron working was introduced into East Africa from more than one direction and therefore by different peoples. The Highland Nilotes, for example, including the Kalenjin-speaking peoples, according to Sutton, "were the first Nilotes to enter East Africa from the north, arriving with iron probably during the first millennium A. D." Sutton assumes that the migration of Bantu-speakers with the knowledge of iron working entered eastern Africa from the south, southwest, and west, thus effectively covering all conceivable directions, but avoiding the issue of "who entered when." The impressiveness of the evidence that Oliver, Posnansky, and Sutton treat is certainly more convincing than anything that H. H. Johnston provided years ago, or that has more recently been presented by G. P. Murdock. The older interpretation is succinctly stated by Endre Sik: "the original homeland of the Bantu . . . is supposed to have been the interior areas of East Equatorial Africa, the region of the Great Lakes." Johnston did better than this by claiming that the "archaic Bantu" came from the west, settled in the Nile valley north of Lake Albert and became "proto-Bantu." Jean Hiernaux's recent evidence supports a Bantu-speaking migration moving across the northern edge of the forest belt in an eastward direction, thus reaching eastern Africa before some elements went south.

22. Sutton, "Iron Age."
27. Johnston, Comparative Study, 22.
Oral tradition appears to support the older interpretation rather than the one advocated by Oliver and Posmansky. Bahitwa's evidence is not alone in looking toward Bunyoro and the west for the answer; Osogo found similar traditions among the Baluyia of western Kenya. Most of his informants traced the course of their ancestors as far as Bunyoro, but a few gave Misri (north would be a preferable interpretation of this word rather than Egypt) and western Africa as their place of origin. To date, oral tradition of this vague a nature has been disregarded because "the period is too remote." Yet the linguistic evidence has certainly not reached a level of infallibility, primarily because of insufficient data, and the archaeological evidence can only provide clues; it cannot, for example, determine who used particular types of pots or from where the users came. Linguistically, M. Guthrie makes a sharp distinction between the Bantu languages spoken north of the Victoria Nyanza and those to the south: "The languages to the south and southeast of Lake Victoria... appear to have come from the original parent language quite independently and so not to be closely related in prehistory to the languages around the north of the lake." However cautiously Guthrie approaches his evidence, he does not appear to have considered sufficiently the enormous impact Nilotic-speakers had upon the Bantu-speakers to the north of the lake. In contrast, Bahitwa looks upon the Bantu-speakers living in both the north and south lake region as the same people; the language difference between the Nyoro and Nyamwezi is for him only incidental. A thorough linguistic analysis of these numerous languages is in order to shed more light upon historical developments. For example, the root -fumu for medicine man and -logi or -loki for witchcraft, found in the western areas of both Uganda and Tanzania, demonstrates an ancient relationship between the various peoples.

The state of archaeological knowledge is equally vague. Dates for the Iron Age are materializing but the material evidence in the form of pottery sherds is difficult to use in isolation. It was generally accepted that dimple based pottery found in the Victoria Nyanza region was related to channelled ware found in Zambia and Rhodesia, but this is now seriously questioned as more evidence becomes available. The historical reconstruction of the early Iron Age to date has been necessarily speculative and tentative and it continues to alter although the picture is becoming clearer.

Paragraph 3. Bahitwa's use of the name Gara (Abagara) is a case where he is undoubtedly referring to a single clan when he speaks of them in paragraphs 5 and 7. Otherwise it is preferable to bear in mind that he may be using his terms as collective names for a cluster of people; in discussions he constantly

32. Vansina inadvertently erred when he claimed that "in the whole Bantu area a root nganga indicates a medicine-man." The oversight emphasizes both the differences that exist in western East Africa and the need for thorough linguistic studies to clarify the confusion. J. Vansina, "The Use of Ethnographic Data as Sources for History," Emerging Themes of African History, T. O. Ranger, ed. (Nairobi, 1968), 106.
referred to the Tatoga, the Sandawe, and the Twa as clans. It was impossible to determine his source of information on the Gara outside the southern lake region, or for Kintu, although the Ganda presence was very strong on Bukerebe in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Traditions may have been transmitted at that time to the Kerebe or they may simply have been a portion of older Kerebe tradition. When he claims the Ghana of former President Nkrumah for the origin of the Gara, it is permissible to interpret this in a regional context, that is, West Africa; he was unaware of any former Ghana empire.

The Sandawe are generally accepted as the first inhabitants of Bukerebe. The only place name in the region attributed to them is Mount Mutiro in Majita, an area to the east of the island. Mutiro was allegedly a leader of the Sandawe in the area. On Bukerebe itself there is a rocky outcrop that possesses a few light red lines on its protected underside. While it does not resemble a picture of anything, appearing to be random straight lines, it may well be the product of the group of people who made similar marks in Usukuma -- reputedly the Tatoga.34 Kerebe tradition does not account for the lines’ existence on Bukerebe but the Tatoga did inhabit the region following the Sandawe. The Kerebe refer to these Tatoga pastoralists as Abakangara, but readily explain that they call themselves Nyaturu -- which causes confusion. In parts of Sukumaland and Buzinza, Nyaturu has also been used to describe a non-Bantu-speaking, pastoral people.35 Fortunately the explorer Oscar Baumann clarified the issue -- at least for the nineteenth century. His information coincides sufficiently with oral tradition to identify the people as Taturu, another name for the Tatoga.36 Sources from the Mwanza District Book also use Taturu or Tatoga. The present day Nyaturu of Tanzania are presently Bantu-speaking and were so in the 1890’s when Baumann passed through their district. Chronologically, then, the hunters (Sandawe) preceded the pastoralists on Bukerebe who were then followed by agricultural-hunters. Kerebe informants in addition to Bahitwa provided the same sequence of appearance.

Paragraph 4. All of the material on Gara migrations was volunteered, not elicited by questioning. My imagination was insufficient to cover the extent of migration attributed to the Gara by Bahitwa. The amount of myth contained in this paragraph remains problematical. Even by substituting the east coast for Mombasa, we are confronted by a sweeping migration that historians, including Bahitwa, seem to relish, in spite of the problems it poses. Bahitwa states that the Gara passed north of Uganda -- he uses the elusive term Misri -- before arriving at the coast which was inhabited by people "who looked like Asians." One possible passage could have taken them through southern Ethiopia and then down a river valley to the coast. There is no indication of when the migration he describes may have taken place, but it can be assumed with some degree of certainty that it was early since all of his other information on the Gara, outside of that in paragraphs 5 and 7, probably occurred during the first millennium A.D. because they are identified as one of the earliest Bantu-speaking clans to live south of the lake.

36. Oscar Baumann, Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle (Berlin, 1894), 168-173.
Paragraph 5. Here Bahitwa is referring to a specific clan. It is significant to note that they were preceded into the region of Buhaya by other Bantu-speaking people, according to Bahitwa, but by the time representatives of the clan reached Bukerebe they had left most Bantu-speakers behind them. Their expansion from Buzinza, accounted for by an increased population, presumably took a considerable period of time.

Paragraph 6. Bahitwa’s association of Kintu with the Gara is of interest in that it suggests that Kintu, or his ancestors, was a migrant from western Africa. Kintu’s “uncle,” Buhaya, is also associated with early migrants into Bunyoro who then migrated in Buhaya. Kintu’s wife, of the Songe clan, is associated, in contrast, with a particular clan and not a generalized group of people. Bahitwa’s version of Kintu’s descendents is extremely abbreviated and illustrates the vagueness of his Ganda history. But the important factor is Kintu’s association with the early Bantu-speakers, implying that he arrived in the region some time between one half and a full millennium anterior to the establishment of the Bito dynasty in Bunyoro.37

Bahitwa’s understanding of Kintu and Muhaya is undoubtedly an attempt to rationalize the limited information at his disposal. Muhaya obviously is the personification of a cluster of people. His information concerning Kintu does not complement that collected by Roscoe among the Ganda. According to the latter traditions, Kintu came from the northeast and introduced cattle.38 The Ganda tradition should be closer to reality than Bahitwa’s data on this point; however, Bahitwa’s information emphasizes the early arrival of Kintu, who may have been a representative of the early pastoralists discussed below.

Paragraph 7. Information on smithing is discussed under paragraph 13. Suggestions of matriliney occurred occasionally during discussions about early clans. Bahitwa was not sure which clans beside the Gara practiced customs associated with matriliney, but he asserted that numerous Kerebe clans were matrilineal since a nephew’s inheritance of his uncle’s wives was prohibited by royal decree in the eighteenth century.

Paragraph 8. The information contained in this paragraph is Bahitwa’s version of why and how people could go through a forest region such as that of the eastern Congo. It is condensed from numerous replies to questions that he had apparently never put to his informants and the statement should be accepted solely as his reconstruction of what might have occurred, not as tradition acquired by him.

Paragraph 9. As indicated in paragraph 1, the majority of people moving out of the Buhai dispersal area went east, a relatively smaller proportion northward, and what was not indicated, a large segment moved to the southeast and now compose a portion of the Nyamwezi. The linguistic variations, for example, between the Nyamwezi and Zinza probably occurred on a significant scale only following intensive contact with Nilotic-speakers within eastern Africa.

Paragraph 10. The various types of food crops attributed to the early agricultural migrants are in basic agreement with research carried out for East Africa as a whole. Crops originating from both the western Sudan and the Ethiopian plateau are represented in the list: sorghum (Sorghum vulgare), cow peas (Vigna unguiculata), and Bambara nuts (Voandzeia subterranea) emanated from the western Sudan while eleusine (Eleusine coracana) and possibly simsim (Sesamum orientale) were introduced from Ethiopia. It is possible that one of the legumes was the pigeon pea (Cajanus cajan), whose origin was either Africa or India, but the identity of the remaining groundnut is indeterminable. Although not mentioned by Bahitwa, a root crop quite probably used by the early Bantu-speaking agricultural-hunters was the Guinea yam (Dioscorea cayenensis and/or D. rotundata). The banana, however, remains an enigma. Kerebe tradition is definite as to the time of its arrival in the district. The individual who is credited with the banana’s introduction arrived in Bukerebe during the 1600’s following his departure from the southwest region (Ihangiro) of the Victoria Nyanza. Bahitwa contends that bananas moved in a southerly direction from the vicinity of Buganda, but he possesses no additional information as to where bananas might have come from before their introduction into that region, although he did volunteer that the Masai took them from Busoga to Arusha. In this case “Masai” could be regarded as a generic name for non-Bantu-speaking pastoralists: Arusha should be regarded as a region including Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru rather than the modern metropolitan community. By stating that the Haya did not have the banana when the Tatoga (Kangara) entered the region, Bahitwa provides the only other chronological aid; the appearance of pastoralists in the west lake district may have been during the first millennium A.D. With the Malaysian food complex bearing so important a role in the reconstruction of early African history, it is mandatory to investigate the banana’s dispersal, as well as that of other food crops and cultural practices as manifested in material culture. From Bahitwa’s traditions, it is suggested that the first Bantu-speaking peoples did not have the banana when they arrived in East Africa, but just who may have introduced it is not suggested by his data. D. N. McMaster favors a movement through Ethiopia to the west as far as the Cameroons, and then back eastward into Uganda.

Paragraph 11. This information is self-explanatory. In the nineteenth century bridewealth consisted of twelve items but, significantly, the value of each item varied depending upon the wealth of the clans involved. Buyanza also stated that the general value of the bridewealth increased during the 1800’s, a phenomenon reflecting the interest in material acquisitions. Other informants did not support Bahitwa’s assertion; they claimed that “it has always been twelve items,” meaning, “to my knowledge it has always been this way.” Only Bahitwa’s traditions on this issue, unfortunately, may in fact be referring to conditions existing centuries ago.


Paragraph 12. His pronouncement that all early clans practiced black-smithing (within the Kerebe context, smelting iron ore is not included when referring to smithing) may well be a generalization. Two factors, however, give credence to the possibility that the majority of clans did, in fact, have smiths within their ranks.42 First, many Kerebe clans had traditions indicating that their members had ceased smithing by the nineteenth century as specialization developed at a rapid pace. Second, Bahitwa’s own clan had a smithing tradition in the seventeenth century and fellow clansmen remaining in Buzinza were considered Longo, the smelting and hoe producing specialists. He readily volunteered this information, an unusual concession since the majority of men today either deny or were never told about their ancestors; by the nineteenth century, and even earlier, smithing was a low status activity, something to be avoided. A considerable social stigma has been associated with smiths that has made marriage difficult for them. Consequently, for a Kerebe to insinuate that another man’s grandfather was a smith is cause for a quarrel. But Bahitwa indiscriminately threw everyone’s grandfather into the same category and, fortunately, his assertion could be supported by other informants. An elder, for example, from the Hira clan, an important non-royal clan that has not practiced smithing for at least three and a half centuries on Bukerebe, agreed with Bahitwa’s contention that his forefathers had smithed at one time, but he readily emphasized that his clan had ceased the activity long ago.

Paragraphs 13 and 14. According to Bahitwa, the Longo (Rongo) were clans that continued to smith after specialization commenced. He defined the verb kulongo as meaning ”to cooperate in smithing” and those who were called Longo in the Buzinza area formed a lower social stratum, a phenomenon more pronounced to the south and east than to the west of the lake, where the division between pastoralists and agriculturalists is readily apparent. Assuming that the majority of early clans had smiths within their midsts, though not necessarily smelters, when and why the status issue emerged is a significant problem. The Kerebe conceived this development to internal factors. As specialization increased, according to informants, clans without smiths obtained metal implements from the specialists and on occasion women would also go to barter for metal implements. Adultery occurred, and a restriction or taboo evolved to prevent this; anyone breaking the taboo allegedly acquired a skin disease after physical contact with smiths. An external factor contributing to the avoidance of smiths and smithing may have been the intrusive Nilotic-speaking peoples (Tatoga), who could have introduced the concept that physical contact with smiths caused illness. However it happened, the emerging pattern was that any clan achieving political dominance over others ceased smithing and thereafter acquired their iron implements from their subordinate neighbors.

A comment recorded in the 1920’s is suggestive and should be noted. The Longo ”were somewhat nomadic since they cultivated little, but engaged almost entirely in the hunting of game and smelting of iron.”43 By giving priority to hunting over agriculture, A.M.D. Turnbull has probably given a fair description of early life not only of the Longo, but of all Bantu-speaking agricultural-hunters throughout eastern Africa. This could account for their seemingly insatiable wanderlust. The Kerebe interest in hunting is partially illustrated in the

42. An important issue is whether the early ”clans” were clans as we now know them or whether it would be preferable to regard them as clusters of people.
43. Turnbull, ”Notes.”
were a gradual development, ever expanding, with the frontier being continually crossed by bands of hunters who felt the need to venture forth for one reason or another.

Paragraph 15. Bahitwa's information on the production of pottery ware is disappointingly meager, presumably because it is the work of women and he never interested himself in learning about it. All Kerebe potters in the twentieth century are women of either Jita or Sukuma extraction, and even among these people only a few clans specialize in making pots. Like smithing, it is a low status activity with numerous taboos and marriage restrictions associated with it. Significantly, Bahitwa stated that the Twa, now in Rwanda and renowned for their pottery craftsmanship, settled in Bukerebe at one time and are remembered in tradition for their production of pots while in the southeastern lake region.

Paragraph 16. The implications of the assertion that cattle were acquired by Bantu-speakers after their arrival in the interlacustrine area are manifold. Bahitwa was adamant on this historical event; furthermore, the information was volunteered and not extracted through questioning. At present the available knowledge concerning the early presence of cattle is summarized by Gideon Were's statement: "We know almost nothing about the indigenous peoples who became the subjects of the pastoral newcomers. It is generally agreed that they were Bantu and that they were primarily cultivators. Some of them, however, kept short-horned humpless cattle." Bahitwa declares that the Bantu have 'always' possessed sheep and goats, but not cattle. A feature that lends support to his tradition is that animal sacrifices associated with ancestral rites utilized either of the two former, but never the latter animals. This may indicate that the first two were in their possession before cattle although it could also reflect the higher value placed on cattle and consequently greater reluctance to sacrifice them. But who introduced cattle is another matter and Bahitwa's identification of the Tatoga, a Highland Nilotic-speaking people, as the group responsible is illuminating in that it provides a point from which to launch continued study.

Christopher Ehret has made a linguistic survey to determine who may have introduced cattle into the interlacustrine region and he is no doubt correct in assuming that the word ente replaced an earlier word for cattle in the region. Bahitwa supported this assumption by claiming that an archaic Kerebe word for cattle was buzimbe, although ente is now used. Archaic Kerebe words also exist for sheep, goat, dog, and chicken, but only for sheep was there a tradition to explain the change from the former word, entama, to the present.

44. See the author's "The Historical and Social Role of Kerebe Music," Tanzania Notes and Records, 70 (1969), 42-44.
47. Entama was apparently the generic term for sheep in the interlacustrine zone; see H. H. Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate, II (London, 1902), 974.
enabalega, which allegedly occurred when a different specie of sheep replaced an earlier type. Whether a change in species of cattle accounted for the change in terminology could not be determined, but it would not be unreasonable since a distinctly different type of cattle, the long-horned type, had been introduced by the 1400's. From his available data, Ehret suggests that a people speaking a Moru-Madi language were responsible for bringing cattle into the interlacustrine area. On the other hand, Bahitwa's traditions identify the Tatoga as the introducing agent -- presumably of the short-horned cattle -- possibly late in the first millennium A.D. The language of the Tatoga is classified as Eastern Sudanic in contrast to the language of the Moru-Madi which is classified as Central Sudanic. The evidence necessary to resolve this discrepancy should be sought and brought to bear on the issue.

According to Bahitwa, the Tatoga arrived in the interlacustrine region after the Bantu-speakers and the pastoralists had to exchange their cattle for agricultural products in times of "hunger." Consequently the Bantu-speakers acquired their short-horned cattle. But even more revealing is the identification of a previously unknown group of people who may have assumed a significant role in the formation of the pre-Bito "kingdoms" in Uganda. The presence of pastoralists with an occasional need for cultivated crops could also have been an added incentive for Bantu-speakers to produce crop surpluses, thus reinforcing their dependence upon the soil.

Paragraph 17. Bahitwa presumes that all pastoralists are related, that is, they are "brothers." His account relating the domestication of cattle not only reflects his desire to know and understand his heritage, but also bears a striking resemblance to the hypothetical reconstruction of cattle domestication by scholars.48 The place names such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Arusha, and Mount Elgon should, of course, be interpreted as regions rather than specific localities.

Paragraph 18. Bahitwa makes no time differentiation between the arrival of the Tatoga and the Hima (Huma) into the interlacustrine zone. But if his information is used in conjunction with what is presently known about the two species of cattle, it becomes apparent that in his tradition the Tatoga and the Hima should be regarded as representing distinctive groups of people with the former preceding the latter, keeping always in mind the possibility of other migrant pastoral clusters. By doing so, considerable light may be shed upon those elusive Bachwezi, at least to the extent of revealing leads that can be profitably investigated. Little is known concerning the early history of the Tatoga. Their language is classified as Eastern Sudanic with the sub-classification Highland Nilotes and they are closely related to the Kalenjin peoples of northwestern Kenya.49 Ehret states that "the ancestral Nilotic people probably inhabited an area along the southern fringe of the Ethiopian highlands near the Lake Rudolph region."50 He adds that the early Highland Nilotes practiced agriculture in addition to herding livestock; they also possessed knowledge of iron working. The

Tatoga were already in northern Tanzania, according to Ehret, "fairly early in the Christian era."51 In contrast to Ehret, G. M. Wilson's earlier contribution concerning the Tatoga places emphasis upon migrations from the Mount Elgon region in the past two to three centuries.52 Wilson's map depicting recent Tatoga migrations and their areas of occupation in the early 1950's shows them moving southward from the Elgon region into northcentral Tanzania with a group occupying an area south of the Victoria Nyanza.53 But with one sub-tribe living in Shinyanga district of Sukumaland, his evidence reveals a much greater time depth of occupation that is more in line with Ehret's assertions. The Tatoga in Shinyanga "claim that their ancestors came from the Bukoba area where they were driven out by the Watusi from a place called Nyalwelwe near the Urundi border."54 Turnbull recorded another version, presumably of the same conflict, and suggested that the Nyaturu (Tatoga) were early occupants of Buzinza.55 A third account of the "same" event was recorded by C. McMahon, who identified the conqueror of the Tatoga as "Chief Luhinda."56 Bahitwa's information complements Ehret's assertion that the Tatoga were early occupants of northern Tanzania and also confirms Wilson's data concerning the Tatoga's presence within the Bukoba district. Bahitwa's traditions also suggest an unexpected migratory route by claiming that the Tatoga left the Mount Elgon region, moved westward into Uganda, then southward through Haya country before turning east into Buzinza, Usukuma, Bukerebe, and finally into the area where they are presently located, the Mbulu district. It should be borne in mind that the Tatoga are composed of numerous distinct units and have apparently never combined into a single political entity, consequently the traditions of each community vary; some may well have passed southward along the eastern shore of the Victoria Nyanza while others moved along the western side.

This brings us to a consideration of the Hima people. As Gideon Were notes, the Bachwezi, Batusi, Bahima, and Bahinda are significant peoples possessing a little understood past who live or lived in western Uganda, northwestern Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi.57 Because the Bachwezi are presumed to have been the first pastoralists and because they are regarded as physically different from the agricultural-hunters -- they "were like the Bahima, but more brilliant."58 -- there is a possibility that the Bachwezi were Highland Nilotic-speaking. They may have been Tatoga who settled in the region for a time, or a closely related group. An intriguing issue is whether the Bachwezi possessed short-horned or long-horned cattle: Were assumes that they had the latter type.59 If the Tatoga introduced cattle into the interlacustrine area, as Bahitwa maintains, they would have been short-horned since traditions designate that the

51. Ibid., 166.
53. Ibid., 40.
54. Ibid., 41.
55. Turnbull, "Notes."
57. Were, "Western Bantu Peoples," 178.
58. Ibid., 179.
59. Ibid., 178.
Hima introduced the long-horned variety. Another less likely possibility is that the Tatoga passed through with their short-horned cattle and were followed at a later time by people who could be identified as Bachwezi and who possessed long-horned cattle.

Paragraph 19. The rapid migration of at least a portion of the Tatoga is revealed in this statement. Although later in entering the interlacustrine region than the agricultural-hunters, the pastoralists outdistanced them by reaching the southeast lake area first. It is unlikely that the Tatoga reaching Bukerebe came from the north along the eastern lake shore -- tradition is strongly oriented to the west side of the lake.

Paragraph 20. This ethnographic information is in agreement with Ehret's data with the exception of fish consumption. This may well have been a local development in the nineteenth century. Bahitwa says that talapia fish were called enfwaega by the Tatoga; the generic Kerebe word for fish is enfwi. The Tatoga words provided by Bahitwa appear to have been Bantuized.

Paragraph 21. E. C. Baker records an interesting phenomenon that was reported to him by Bantu-speaking Shashi informants living just to the east of the Kerebe: "it is stated that whenever the oath or totem of the clan takes the form of cattle, the origin of that clan is to be found amongst Tatiru [Taturu or Tatoga]." This statement suggests a lead to be followed with potentially significant results.

Paragraph 22. Bantu-speaking people living at Majita had adopted the practice of circumcision by the seventeenth century. People living on Bukerebe itself, only twenty-five miles southwest of Majita, may also have done so at the time, but with the establishment of a ruling dynasty by the royal clan in the 1600's, the Kerebe frowned upon circumcision, while the Jita have continued it up to the present century. The adoption of circumcision by Bantu-speakers may relate to internmarriage with pastoralists as suggested by Baker's comment. Kerebe tradition reveals that when members of the royal clan went into exile within communities along the southeastern side of the lake, they could not marry there until they had been circumcised.

Paragraph 23. The sequence of peoples migrating into Bukerebe is repeated with the added notation that the Tatoga returned to the region in the eighteenth century. The Kerebe royal clan was then forced off what is now the mainland peninsula and on to the present island. The conflict arose over grazing land and cattle with the Kerebe losing a good proportion of their livestock. Another investigation suggested by Bahitwa's data concerns the significant increase in the Victoria Nyanza's water level early in the 1800's. His contention in paragraph 1 that not only Bukerebe but also the islands off the Zinza coast were formed at this time has implications for geographers as well as historians.

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60. Ehret, "Cushites and the Highland and Plains Nilotes," 164, 166.
As an historian of informal historical traditions Bahitwa can, unfortunately, have few peers in eastern Africa. Yet the value of his traditions cannot be fully determined until more oral traditions from the same general region are collected and compared with those of Bahitwa and other Kerebe informants. The major difficulty in oral traditions is not their acknowledged shortcomings, which can be recognized and frequently overcome; rather, it lies in the process of extracting traditions from informants. The researcher himself becomes fundamentally involved, for if he does not ask the right question, valuable evidence may never be acquired. What to ask, of course, continually haunts the entire investigative process. The use of questionnaires adds strength in significant ways and is excellent for some types of information, but simultaneously restricts the process in other ways, with the amount of time required to comprehend the complex verbal milieu in which Bahitwa's traditions were encased being a case in point. Nonetheless, what has been collected from the Kerebe historian is presented for examination and appraisal by other historians. He has provided few answers to the many perplexing problems of the early Iron Age, but his traditions suggest numerous leads for investigation that can only benefit the historical reconstruction process.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

11th December, 1970.

The Road to Ulundi

Thank you for your review of this book. Perhaps you could point out to Mr. Alan R. Booth of Ohio University that he has fallen into the error of confusing Lt. Col. John North Crealock, Chelmsford's staff officer, with his older brother, Major-General Henry Hope Crealock, who commanded the First Division on the coast. This point is made quite clear in the introduction to the book. Similarly, anyone who has knowledge of the Zulu war knows that staff officers had to spend considerable time waiting for the very slow baggage trains to bring up all the panoply of war.

Yours faithfully,
R. A. Brown
Acting Secretary
University of Natal Press